Chess Classics

Mark Taimanov

I was a victim of Bobby Fischer



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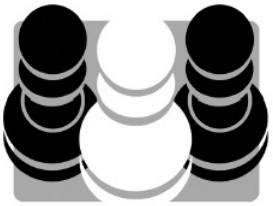
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I was a Victim of ♗obby Fischer

By

Mark Taimanov



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Key to symbols used

⩲	White is slightly better
⩱	Black is slightly better
±	White is better
∓	Black is better
+−	White has a decisive advantage
−+	Black has a decisive advantage
=	equality
⩳	with compensation
⇄	with counterplay
↑	with an initiative
∞	unclear
?	a weak move
??	a blunder
!	a good move
!!	an excellent move
!?	a move worth considering
?!	a move of doubtful value
□	only move
#	mate

Throughout the text, up to Chapter 14, are superscript numbers that refer to Translator's Notes. Click on the numbers to see them.

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I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer sounds like the sort of 'jazzed-up' title a Western publisher might choose instead of the sober title the Russian author preferred. But that's not the case here – *I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer* is a direct translation of the Russian title Mark Taimanov wanted. The author is sadly no longer with us, having died at the age of 90 in 2016, but his wishes were clearly expressed to us by his Russian publisher and his widow: his title was to be used, his text was to be faithfully translated – a task Douglas Griffin performed admirably – and no computer corrections added in his main text. If we wanted to add text, we could do so at the beginning of the book and the end, but his story should flow as he intended in the heart of the book. We were happy to follow the author's instructions.

So who was Mark Taimanov? I suspect younger readers might know him only for the Sicilian variation named in his honour, or for losing 6–0 to Bobby Fischer. In the pages that follow we shall learn all about that match, its origins and its aftermath, including severe personal consequences for Taimanov.

But there was so much more to Taimanov – he was one of the greatest chess players of the 20th century. Twice he tied for the Soviet Championship, once winning the play-off against Spassky and Averbakh, once being edged out by Botvinnik. Taimanov won Olympiad team Gold, while his record in European Team Championships was extraordinary – in four such events, he achieved a clean sweep of four team Golds and four individual Golds. He still played strongly at an advanced age, winning the World Senior Championship twice.

Strict judges might place Taimanov just below the great World Champions of the 20th century, but he should be pushed no lower.

Chess was just one of three outstanding careers that Taimanov enjoyed, with music and writing the other two. He was renowned as a world-class concert pianist. And typically of Taimanov, his career was long – at the age of just eleven he starred in a Soviet film, though curiously playing a violin rather than on his favoured piano.

As publishers, we rarely mention an author's personal life, but Taimanov also lived his life to the fullest in this area. He married four times, including becoming a father to twins at the age of 78.

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Towards the end of the book, after the author has had his say, we added some sections that we hope the reader will appreciate. The translator Douglas Griffin , with much-appreciated help from individuals we mention on page 2, did valuable archaeological work, unearthing and translating interesting material, including other annotated games involving Taimanov.

And then GM Jacob Aagaard discusses *12 Interesting Positions* from the book with three young American friends – Sam Shankland, Jeffery Xiong and Awonder Liang. It's *not* a computer-check of the book – which Taimanov would have disliked – but instead four modern grandmasters revealing what they can see in the positions Taimanov played and analysed. Our thanks to the young Americans.

We hope you will enjoy this work by Mark Evgenievich Taimanov. Since the author is largely writing about a match he lost, you might guess that this book would be full of regrets. At the risk of giving away a spoiler, I will say that this is far from true, and Taimanov's book is infused with his love of the beauty of chess.

John Shaw
Glasgow, April 2021

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This book was written and submitted to the German publishing house Stamer-verlag, prior to the sensational return of the legendary Robert James Fischer to the abode of the chess Olympus – a few months before his 'Return Match of the Century for the World Championship' with Boris Spassky. And although in the final pages of the manuscript I expressed modest hopes of such a turnaround in the fate of the mysterious recluse, the entire concept of the author was built on the fatal destiny of the tragic self-imposed isolation of the great grandmaster. But a miracle occurred, in which no-one had believed.

Disdaining the logic of his previous life, destroying the legend, not explaining either his reasons or his aims, Bobby Fischer 'returned from oblivion' and loudly declared his chess ambitions. His decision to play a return match after a twenty-year interval against the defeated Boris Spassky stirred the entire chess world.

Alas, replacing the euphoric mood of the first edition, there came the turn of woeful disappointment. Fischer did not appear as people had remembered him, as they had admired him, and as they had been ready to idolize him.

The long years of a hermit-like existence had left their mark both on his appearance and, most importantly, on the creative potential of the great chessplayer.

In place of the invincible and undefeated chess genius, who had at the height of his powers voluntarily departed the chess Olympus, the world saw an aged, noticeably weakened grandmaster, left behind in his chess views, who during twenty years of inaction had been bypassed by an entire cohort of young talents.

Of the previous Fischer there remained only a shadow, and with now unjustified ambitions.

And although Fischer managed to win the match against his bosom buddy and historic opponent, this victory did not bring him the desired laurels, and the subsequent dramatic events (the sharp reaction of the American State Department, the bankruptcy of the sponsor – the millionaire Vasiljević), alas, deprived Fischer of both his home and legitimate material gain. Clearly, Fischer's decision to return to chess had come at a bad time...

In such a situation, problems arose for the author of recollections of the great chessplayer, having received an offer to publish the book, *I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer*, in the Russian language. Indeed, the conception of the book proved to have been put in doubt, the predictions were untenable,

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the views and assessments of the hero questionable in the light of recent events.

Perhaps it was necessary to critically rethink what had been written, to make corrections, to remove some of the text...?

Reading over the manuscript again, the author categorically and without hesitation decided not to change a single line.

The book is dedicated to Fischer, whom the author knew over the course of a decade, a great chessplayer, whose play gave rise to universal admiration, and whose image, for all of his apparent eccentricity, was one of absolute internal harmony. This was Fischer, who delighted and conquered the entire chess world; Fischer, who remained in the memory as a romantic hero and a mysterious recluse; Fischer – the legend.

The same Fischer who after twenty years of seclusion returned to chess life, proving to be a completely different person, perhaps interesting in his own way and worthy of general attention, respect and recognition, but lacking romantic flair and mystery, and most importantly – without the irresistible chess authority and titanic chess strength.

Probably the 'reborn' Fischer will find a keen supporter, wishing to follow the evolution of this extraordinary personality over the course of his whole life, and a book will be written about this. May God grant it!

But that will be a different book about a different hero. This author devotes his work and memory to the one and only Fischer, who remains in the memory as a genius, who made an inestimable contribution to the treasury of chess art, and who left the Olympus undefeated.

Mark Taimanov 1
Saint Petersburg 1993

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"Chess was for him a miraculous world, to which he dedicated his entire life. Some called him a genius and the greatest champion of all time; others an egocentric, unpredictable loner..."

The great American chessplayer Robert James Fischer is not yet fifty. For many of his peers and colleagues this is a time of maturity, success and creative achievements.

Recall that at this time of their lives the World Champions of the past, Wilhelm Steinitz, Emanuel Lasker, Alexander Alekhine and Mikhail Botvinnik firmly held the king's sceptre in their hands. And there is no doubt that the 11th World Champion R. Fischer, who abandoned the throne undefeated, could, with his talent, devotion to chess, and sense of purpose, have still today played an important role in the battle for the highest chess title. But, alas, one usually speaks of him only in the past tense. For twenty years now Fischer has not taken part in any competitions – by a strange whim of his extraordinary world view he voluntarily abandoned the chess world, dooming himself to lonely seclusion...

But it is impossible to forget Fischer – he is a living legend with a mysterious, tragic fate, and his name will continue to excite general interest.

...It occurs as if spontaneously, without any visible reasons, but every time in meetings with chess lovers – be it at lectures, interviews, simultaneous displays – regardless of the topic of the speech and the make-up of the audience, one question invariably arises and immediately intrigues the auditorium: "What is Fischer doing now?"

Seemingly, during the past years when the attention of the chess world has been firmly focused on the raging rivalry of the 'two great Ks' – Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov – the name of the strange chess recluse could have imperceptibly sunk into oblivion all by itself, gone once and for all. But on the contrary, at this very moment, in the context of global discussions on the fate of the chess crown, the figure of Robert Fischer has come to be of particular interest and attractiveness as the only worthy counter-balance to the duet dominating on the Olympus.

It is amusing that diplomatic chess lovers are usually afraid to address questions to me about Robert Fischer, and they simply excuse themselves for involuntary lack of tact, clearly considering that a single reminder of that terrible name could traumatize the ageing grandmaster; that a hint of that past fiasco could reopen old wounds... While appreciating this sensitivity, I will take this opportunity to nonetheless reject this idea completely. I admit that although the memory of the world championship quarter-final match in 1971 against Fischer brought me the greatest disappointment, and moreover, also had far-reaching, distressing consequences for me (of which we will later speak), I recall this

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duel as one of the brightest and most significant events of my life. I got to be one of the last (followed by B. Larsen, T. Petrosian and B. Spassky) to play a match with an outstanding grandmaster occupying an honourable place in the history of chess, and to experience enormous creative happiness, since it was generally recognized that, despite the sensationally catastrophic result, the games themselves were exceptionally full of content and fight.

This dramatic duel has, alas, not left its due mark in chess literature. At first, it was overshadowed by the events leading to the historic change of champions, then by the withdrawal of Fischer from chess life, and then by countless events that have taken place in quickly-passing time. For the new generation that has entered the broad chess arena, my match with Fischer, as well as the great grandmaster himself, has remained blurred by the unstoppable stream of topical information flooding from periodical publications. But it is a sin to forget the milestones of history. Especially the creativity of the leading lights. And therefore I consider it my duty to share on the pages of a book my recollections of a great chessplayer and exceptional personality, against whom fate pitted me in his very best years. I enter upon this mission with a sense of admiration for the talent of Robert Fischer and I bow before his dedication to chess art.



Taimanov, Tal, Petrosian and Korchnoi – Tbilisi 1958

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PART I

BOBBY FISCHER AS I KNEW HIM

My first acquaintance with Robert, generally known as Bobby Fischer, took place at the very start of the brilliant career of the American champion, in the days of his youth, at the grandiose international tournament in Buenos Aires. This was in the year 1960. Fischer had only just turned 17, but he had already succeeded in proving himself to be one of the strongest chessplayers in the world. His successes were dizzying – a genuine chess *wunderkind*. At only 14 years of age Bobby had become United States champion, at 15 – an international grandmaster, at 16 – a candidate for the world championship!

Bobby arrived in Buenos Aires to win. At the very first press conference he straightforwardly and without false modesty declared: “In this tournament I am the youngest, but also the strongest! I want to take 1st place.” (I recall that grandmaster Samuel Reshevsky, who was highly jealous of the success of his young compatriot, immediately announced: “I would be content to finish 19th, provided Fischer was 20th...”)

Bobby created the impression of being a somewhat reserved, self-confident youth. He was tall, slender, sweeping and sharp in his movements, outwardly attractive.

Much was written about Fischer at that time. Besides the recognition of his enormous talent (there is nothing to be done about it!), his chess achievements (and they were obvious), his purposeful work ethic (about which legends were already being made up), journalists sneered at the famous grandmaster in every possible way, attributing God knows how many flaws to him. Admittedly, Bobby gave them a lot of reasons for this – he was immature, ingenuous, naïve, unselfconscious, and therefore also vulnerable. Fischer was really much better at playing chess than in giving press

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conferences and he often appeared in an unfavourable light. Bobby was criticized for excessive commercialism, associated with his usual demands to organizers that they not only pay him to appear, but also present him with gifts (this was discussed as early as his childhood years), which could not under any circumstances be flowers or books, but preferably items of jewellery. Fischer was found to be eccentric, since he did not hide the fact that he wanted to dress as well as the president of the USA and collected suits. He was accused of a lack of education, remembering that he had left school at 15 years of age, saying as his goodbye: "Finishing school is for blockheads. I don't need a certificate in order to play chess... besides, teachers are dreadful nonentities." There was no mistake that Fischer could not be reproached for.

Of course, Bobby did not have a perfect upbringing, and indeed where would it have come from? From an early age he was deprived of familial well-being and only his sister Joan, just four years older than Bobby, concerned herself with him... Essentially he was left on his own, and he can be forgiven for much: for his intemperance, for God knows what manners, and for being unsociable for his years. Bobby had his own world – the world of chess, where he felt happy. As concerns education, Fischer indeed neglected it, and perhaps paid for this, but when many years ago his IQ was subjected to scientific testing, the results were very high: with the norm in the range 110-120, he was 189!

The tournament in Buenos Aires proved to be the most unsuccessful in Fischer's career; moreover, it was the only genuine failure. But even there he at times provoked the admiration of his colleagues with his chess prowess.

I will never forget the impression of our first encounter. This was somewhere in the middle of the competition. Bobby had lost the day before; he had been very upset – it was said that he had even cried, but had tried to keep himself together. In the evening, at a reception in the Embassy, finding himself in company, he suddenly became excited – "That's enough," said Bobby. "Forget the failures. Tomorrow I will begin to win! Who am I playing against? Against Taimanov? Well, even more so!" If one considers that I was standing nearby, his self-confident announcement did not sound too tactful. I admit, it would have been hard to think of a better incentive going into our encounter: "Well, Bobby, just you wait!"

This game I played with particular enthusiasm and effort, but it is often the case that when one wants not just to win, but to 'punish' the opponent, the nerves can fail. I fell into time trouble and before the time control let slip a certain victory. But even in the adjourned position winning chances were retained – Fischer was faced with a difficult defence in an endgame where he was a pawn down. Colleagues proposed a bet – "Bobby will not find a way to save the game; this is impossible – such accuracy is required!" And indeed, when the game resumed, I sensed that the correct decisions did not come easily to Fischer, and he was balancing on the edge of the abyss. But then came the critical, most important position and... Bobby suddenly began to play quickly and faultlessly, like a machine – rattling off almost 15 'only' moves in a minute. The draw became inevitable and, stunned by such a finale, I asked: "Bobby, how did you manage to find this way to save the game, and indeed, so quickly?"

"There was no need for me to think," replied the happy Fischer with a smile. "Seven years ago in your magazine *Shakhmaty v SSSR* a detailed analysis of this endgame was published; it was done by Averbakh – and I knew all the variations perfectly."

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I will take the opportunity to recall this duel, which developed exceptionally interestingly.

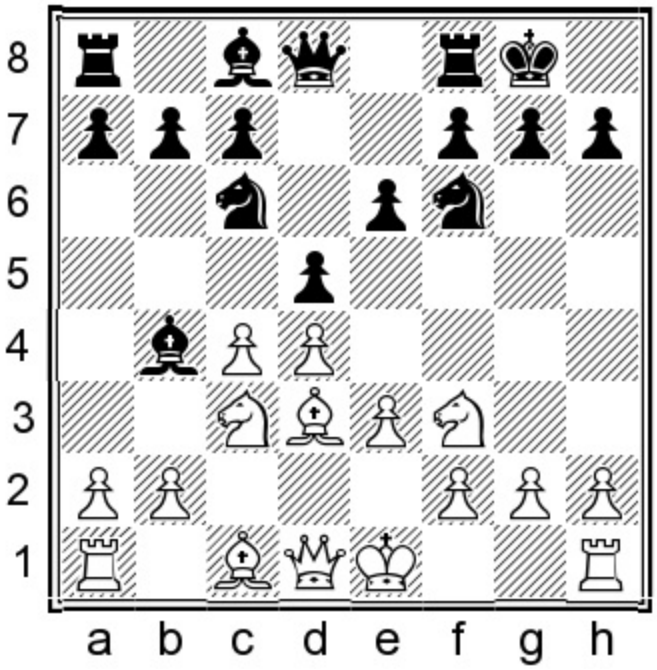
Mark Taimanov – Robert James Fischer

Buenos Aires 1960

Nimzo-Indian Defence

1.c4 ♘f6 2.♘c3 e6 3.d4 ♗b4 4.e3 0-0 5.♗d3 d5 6.♘f3 ♘c6

An interesting psychological choice. Bobby employs a system of defence often and willingly played by... his opponent. Thus, an immediate challenge to a principled, creative debate!



7.0-0 dxc4 8.♗xc4 ♗d6

A straightforward strategy – Black prepares the freeing undermining of the centre by ...e6-e5.

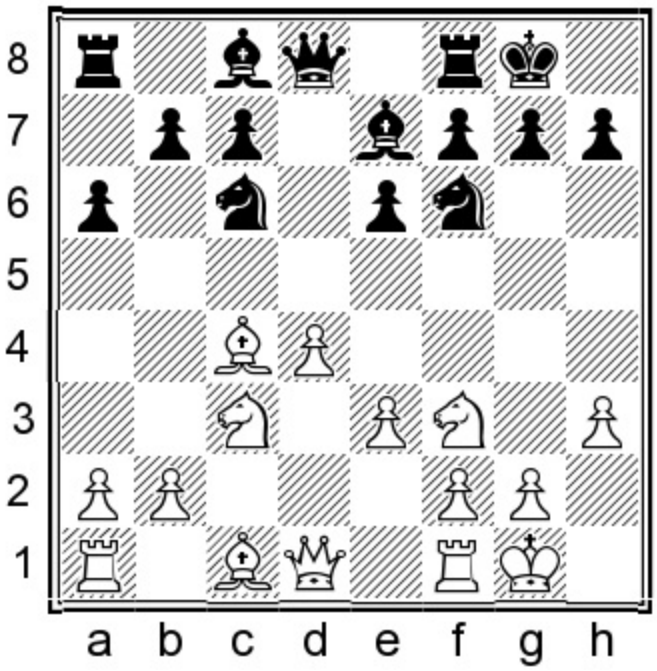
Nowadays, so as to avoid the reply 9.♗b5!?, Black usually plays 8...a6 first, and only in the case of 9.h3 then 9...♗d6. However, with a transposition of moves, this is precisely the path that the players take.

9.♘b5 ♗e7

Theory also examines the continuation 9...a6 10.♘xd6 cxd6 11.♗d2 d5, but Fischer always valued his bishops.

10.h3 a6 11.♘c3

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11...♗d6

A few months later – in the 14th Olympiad in Leipzig – Fischer, evidently unsatisfied with the development of events in the opening of our encounter, tried a different plan against Gligorić: 11...b5 12.♗d3 ♗b7 And Black achieved a comfortable mobilization of his forces.

12.e4 e5 13.♗e3

It is well known that the advance 13.d5 only favours Black. After 13...♘e7 14.♗e3 ♘g6 he has excellent prospects on the king's flank.

13...exd4

Here too, the continuation 13...b5 14.♗b3 ♗b7 deserves attention, but Fischer, who at that time was still insufficiently experienced, acts guilelessly and soon falls into the worse position.

14.♘xd4

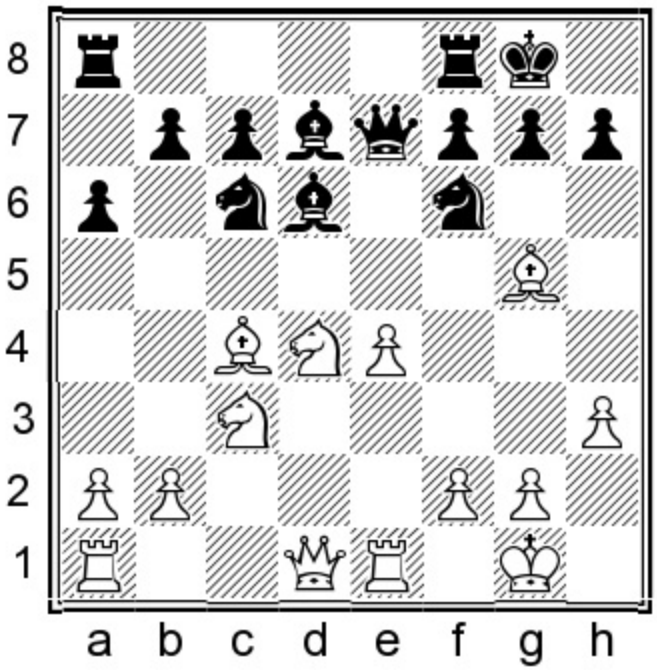
Also interesting is 14.♗xd4 ♘xd4 15.♕xd4 with a powerful centre for White. 2

14...♗d7 15.♖e1 ♕e7 3

16.♗g5!?

It has become obvious that Black's position, in view of the threat of the leap of the enemy knight to d5, gives cause for anxiety. And indeed, even after the best defence –16...♗e5 – the reply 17.♘f3 poses difficult problems. But Fischer, in this critical situation, unexpectedly commits an oversight – which, I will add, was an extremely rare occurrence for him – and in general he turns out to be on the edge of the abyss.

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16...♘xd4 17.♘d5!

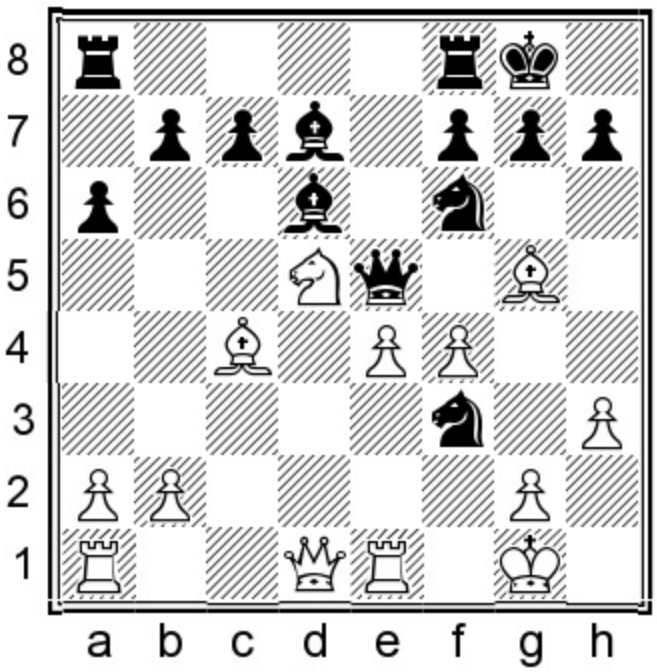
A blow of terrible strength!

17...♕e5 18.f4

I recall that at this moment I expected the capitulation of my formidable opponent.

18...♘f3†

Fischer's resourcefulness is generally recognized, but even this clever trick ought not to have saved him.



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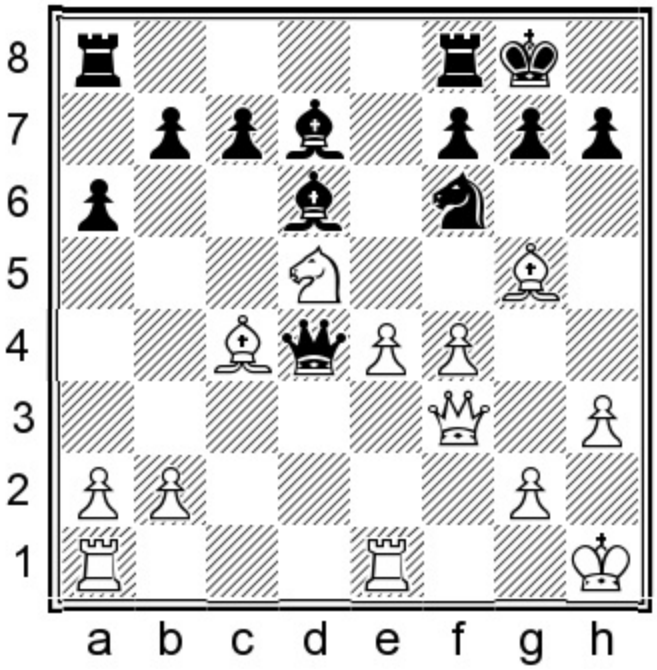
19.♕xf3?

Clearly, nervous tension provoked by the nearness of victory was the reason for this mistaken decision. I still cannot find another explanation as to why 19.gxf3 was not played. 4

A straightforward analysis convinces one of the fact that this move deprived my opponent of any hopes of salvation. For instance, 19...♕xb2 20.♖e2 ♗c5† 21.♔h1 ♕d4 22.♗xf6 gxf6 23.♕xd4 ♗xd4 24.♖d1 c5 25.♖xd4 cxd4 26.♘xf6† and 27.♘xd7, or 19...♗c5† 20.♔h1 ♕d4 21.♗xf6 and White wins quickly.

Now, however, after a distressing slip, the struggle flares up with new sharpness.

19...♕d4† 20.♔h1



20...♘g4!

Having fortunately escaped the main danger, Fischer has gained optimism and, with his habitual inventiveness, overcomes the critical situation.

Obviously, 20...♕xc4 will not do in view of 21.♘xf6† gxf6 22.♗xf6; while in the event of 20...♘xd5 21.♗xd5 White's advantage would also have been obvious.

21.hxg4 ♕xc4 22.b3 ♕b5 23.a4 ♕a5 24.♖ed1

The initiative remains on the side of White, but it, alas, is not what it was a few moves ago...

24...♗c6 25.e5 5

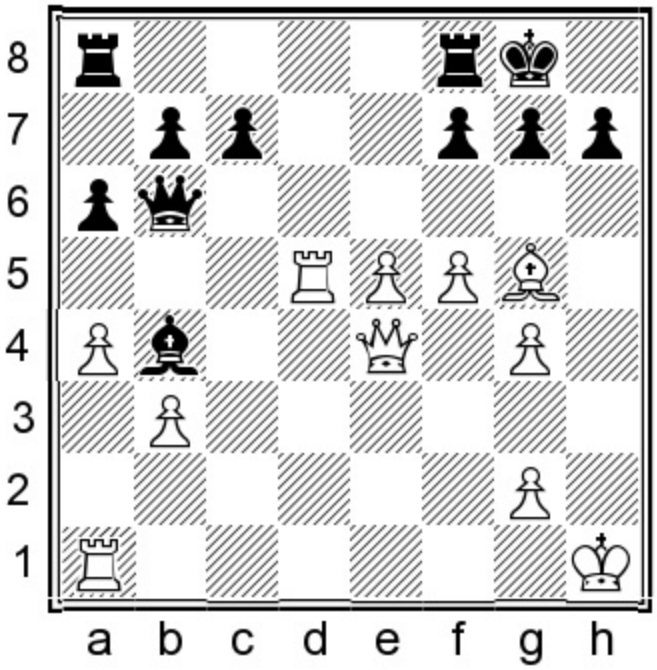
25...♗b4 26.♕e4 6

26...♗xd5 27.♖xd5 ♕b6 28.f5

Seemingly, White's offensive has taken on formidable dimensions, but Fischer inexhaustibly

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seeks out active resources to deflect the opponent from the intended plan of attack.



28...♗c3 29.♖c1 ♗b2!? 30.♖b1 ♗c3 31.♖c1 ♗b2 32.♖c4 7

Of course, in this situation there was no point in my accepting the silent offer of a draw by repetition of moves, even against Fischer himself.

32...♖ae8!

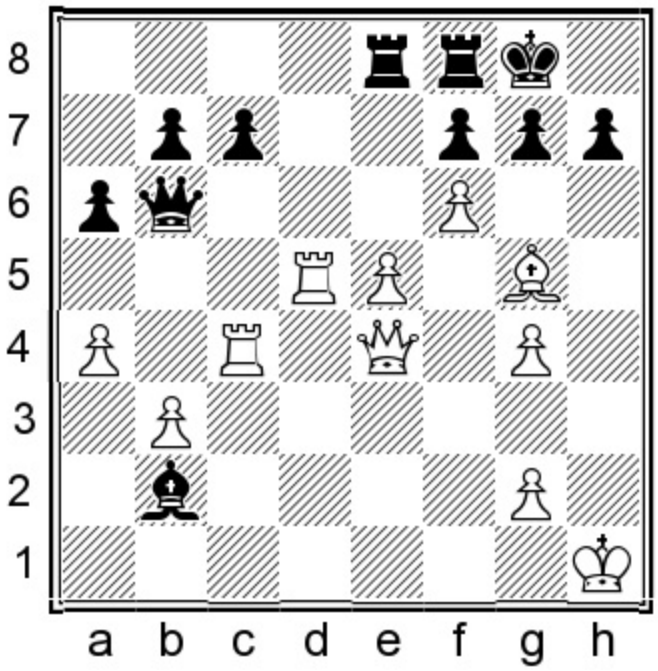
Bobby's resourcefulness in difficult situations is above all praise! White already has to reckon with the threat of 33...f6.

Of course, 32...♕xb3 could not be played in view of 33.♖b4.

33.f6!

The signal for a tactical skirmish.

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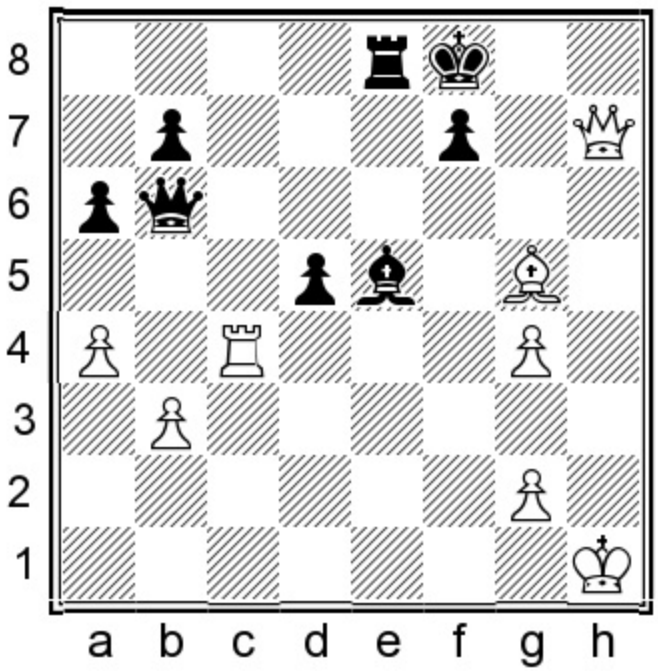


33...c6 34.fxg7 cxd5 35.gxf8=♕† ♔xf8!

This looks like a risky move, but in fact it is the best.

On the natural 35...♖xf8 there would have followed 36.♕xd5 and bad is 36...♕xb3, in view of 37.♗h6 ♖e8 38.♖c8!.

36.♕xh7! ♗xe5



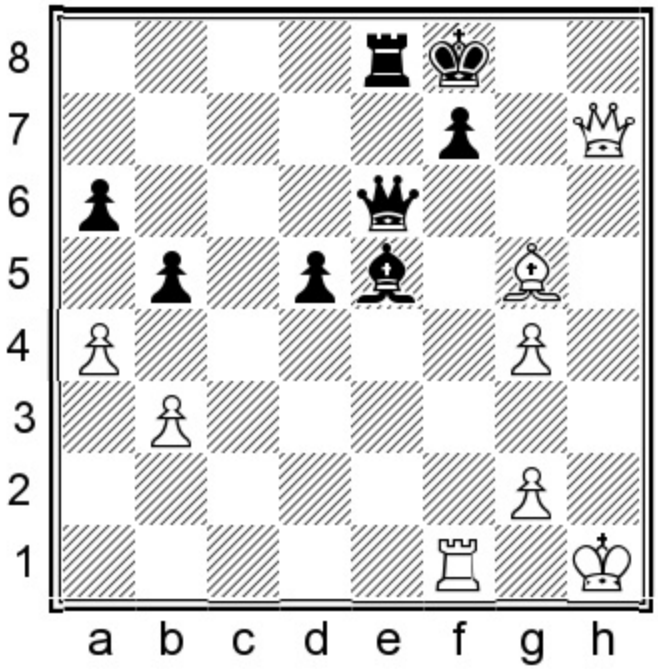
37.♖f4! ♕e6

Blow follows blow, but Fischer does not lose his composure and in a dangerous situation, compounded by time trouble, parries the threats in masterful fashion.

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Of course, 37...♗xf4 was impossible in view of 38.♕h8#!

38.♖f1 b5 8



39.axb5?

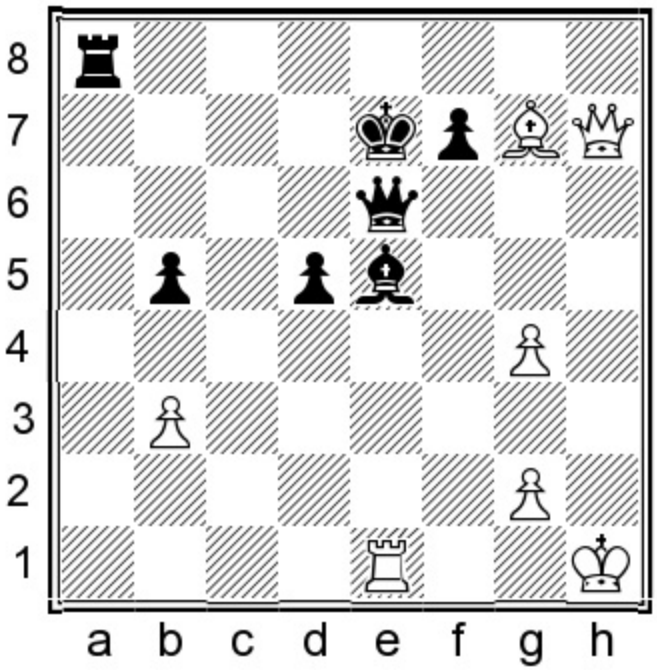
What care is needed in relation to 'natural' continuations! The desire to gain time in anticipation of the time control on the 40th move results in the loss of the lion's share of the advantage.

The pressure should have been increased by means of the previously-intended manoeuvre 39.♖e1! and the pin on the e-file could have caused serious worries.

39...axb5 40.♗d2

Only here did I see that after the opening of the a-file the 'programmed' move 40.♖e1 no longer promises White anything in view of the reply 40...♖a8! with the aim of exchanging rooks on the first rank. For instance: 40.♖e1 ♖a8 41.♗h6† ♔e7 42.♗g7

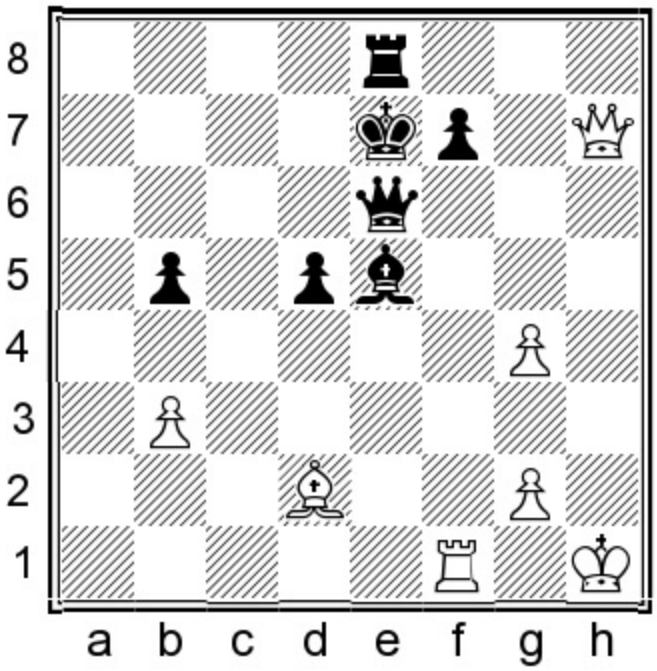
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42...♖a1! 43.♖xa1 ♗xa1 44.♗xa1 ♕e1† 45.♔h2 ♕xa1 A good chance to decide the outcome of the dramatic struggle in my favour had been let slip for the second time in this game...

40...♔e7!

At this moment Fischer sighed with relief – behind him was not only time trouble, but also the main danger. In addition, the game was now adjourned, opening up the prospect of assessing the situation with quiet home analysis.



41.♗b4†

This move was sealed. Hastily setting up the adjourned position on the board on returning to the hotel, to my chagrin it was easy to see that no particular cause for optimism remained... Black's king

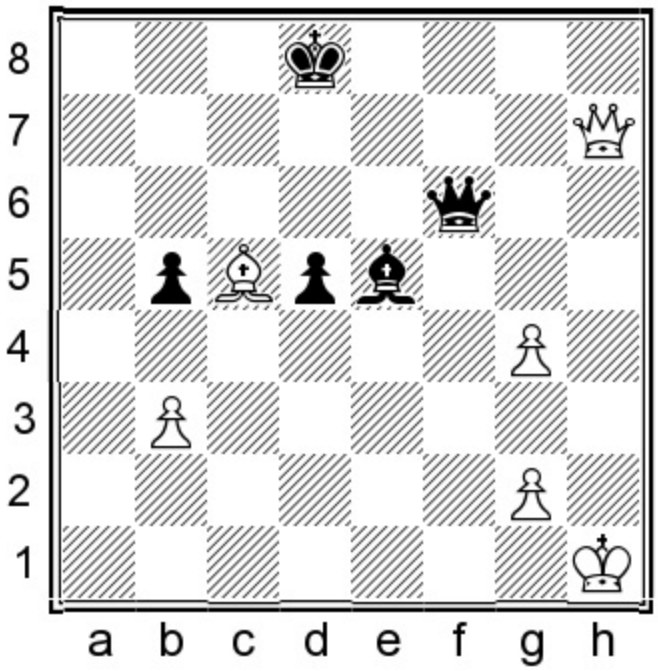
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has slipped away from the danger zone, while the threat that has suddenly arisen on the part of the opponent – the manoeuvre of the rook to h8 – even forces White to concern himself with his own king. In short, it had become obvious that a peaceful result to this long-suffering duel was the most likely.

41...♔d8 42.♖xf7

It was possible to force a draw with 42.♗a5† and if 42...♔c8, then 43.♖xf7 ♖h8 44.♖c7† ♔b8 45.♖b7†. But the excitement of the struggle had still not exhausted itself.

42...♖h8 43.♖f8† ♖xf8 44.♗xf8 ♕f6! 45.♗c5



45...d4

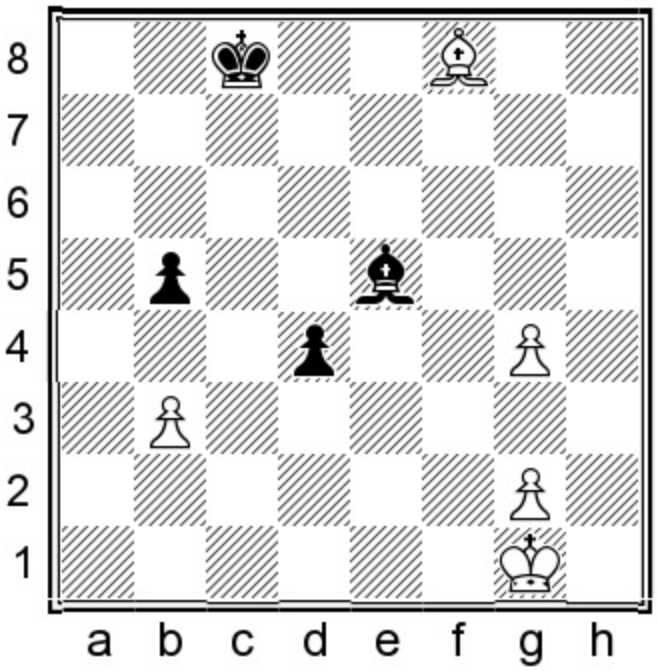
Interestingly, here Fischer too was not satisfied with the peace that would be rapidly achieved by means of 45...♕f1† 46.♗g1 ♗d4 47.♕h2 ♕e1!. Did he really consider his chances to be preferable in the endgame that has arisen? Already in his youth, how deep was his faith in his own powers!

46.♔g1!

Probably Fischer had underestimated this strong defensive move. Now he is once again confronted with difficult problems. After all, White has an extra, albeit doubled, pawn.

46...♕f4 47.♕e7† ♔c8 48.♕f8† ♕xf8 49.♗xf8

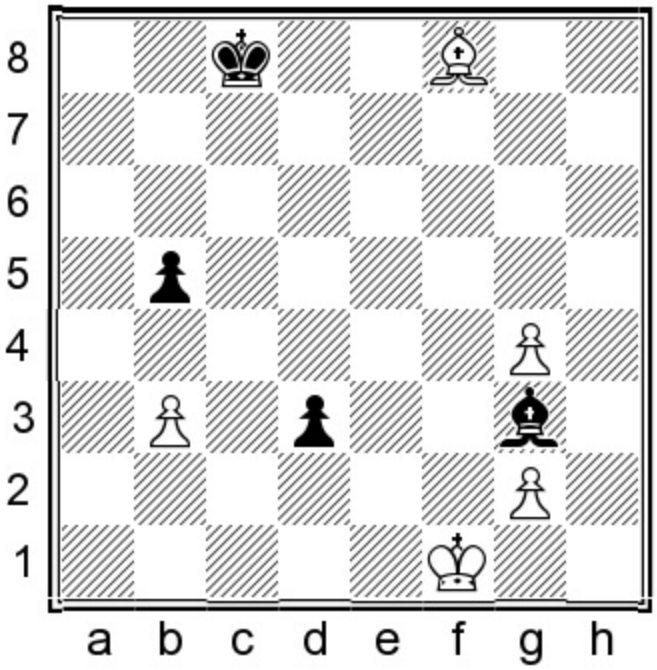
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As a result of the tactical complications, there has arisen on the board a bishop endgame in which Black's prospects of a draw appear, perhaps, to be less real than those of White's of the win. But at precisely this moment Fischer unexpectedly stopped thinking and played quickly and accurately, like a computer according to a perfectly-compiled program.

49...♗g3 50.♔f1 d3!

First and foremost, limiting the mobility of the white king so as to gain time for the relocation of his main force onto the king's flank, where White's passed pawns are located.

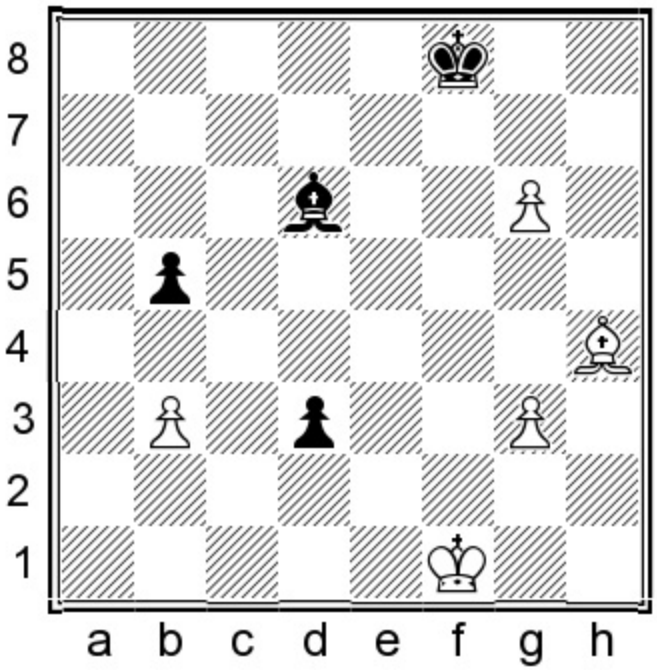


51.♗b4 ♔d7 52.♗e1 ♗f4 53.♗c3 ♗g3 54.g5 ♔e6 55.g6 ♔e7 56.♗e1 ♗f4 57.♗h4† ♔f8 58.g3 ♗d6

Black has had to concede the important diagonal c1-h6.

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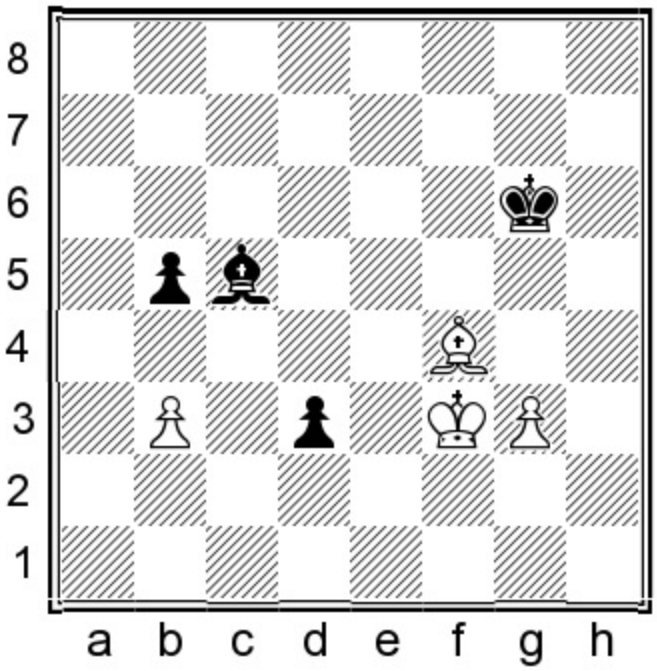
In the case of, say, 58...♗e3 or 58...♗h6 White carries out the manoeuvre ♗h4-f6-e5-f4 and all the same drives away the black bishop.



59.♔f2

Finally the white king escapes to freedom. The moment is not far off when White will manage to win the passed d3-pawn, though in return leaving the g6-pawn undefended. This is of course a definite achievement for him.

59...♗c5† 60.♔f3 ♔g7 61.♗g5 ♔xg6 62.♗f4



62...♔h5!

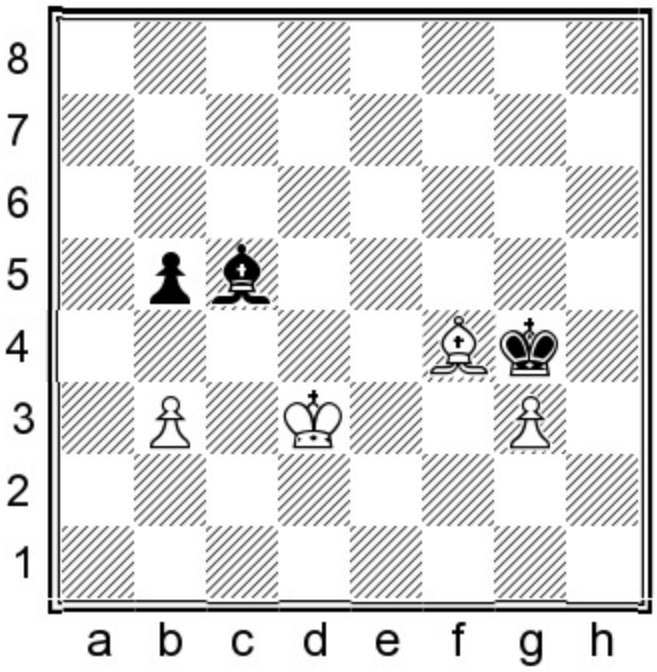
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The only move! It is essential to take the g3-pawn under control.

The ‘natural’ 62...♔f5 would have been bad in view of 63.g4† ♔e6 64.♔e4.

Now, however, on 63.g4† there is the reply 63...♔h4!.

63.♔e4 ♔g4 64.♔xd3



Thus, another stage of the instructive bishop endgame has concluded. White has an extra, and moreover distant, passed g-pawn that ties down the black king and it seems that after the coming inevitable exchange of it for Black’s b-pawn, White’s winning chances could become real in view of the remoteness of the enemy king from the main sector of the battle. Alas, this impression is deceptive and (in contrast to me!) Fischer knew for certain that the position that subsequently arises is a theoretical draw.

64...♔f3! 65.♗c7 ♗f2 66.♗d6

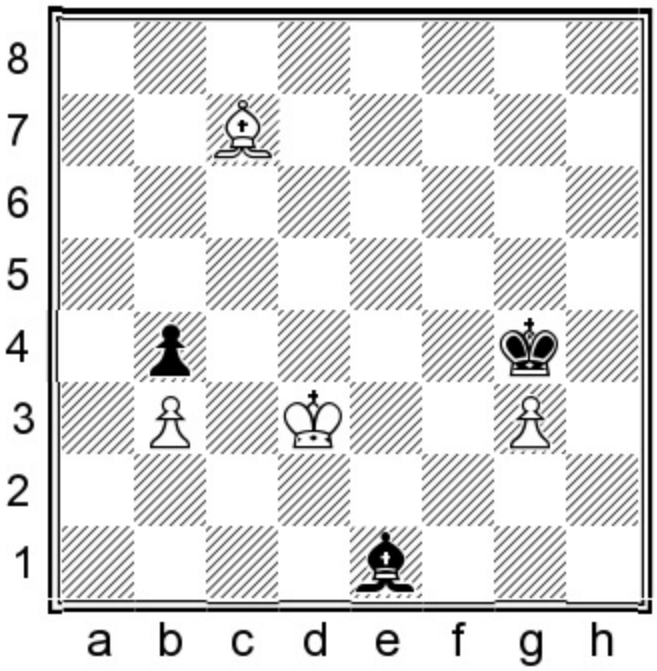
Realizing a typical motif of zugzwang and exploiting the fact that the g3-pawn is invulnerable, White manages to break through to the enemy pawn with the king.

66...♗e1 67.♔d4 ♔g4 68.♔c5 b4 69.♔b5 ♔f5 70.♔c4 ♔e6 71.♗c7

For the time being White manoeuvres, trying to choose the most favourable moment for the exchange of pawns.

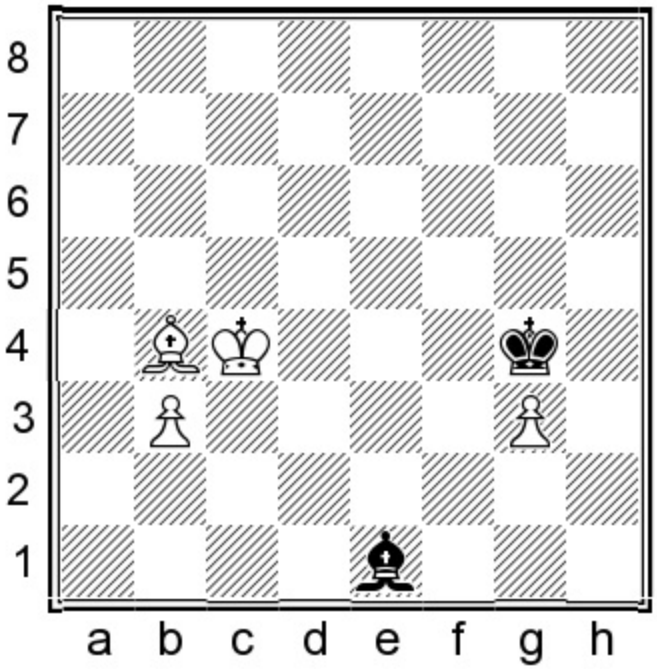
71...♔f5 72.♔d3 ♔g4

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Fischer plays very attentively and does not permit the manoeuvre ♔d3-e2-f3, which would be dangerous for him.

73.♗d6 ♗c3! 74.♔c4 ♗e1 75.♗xb4

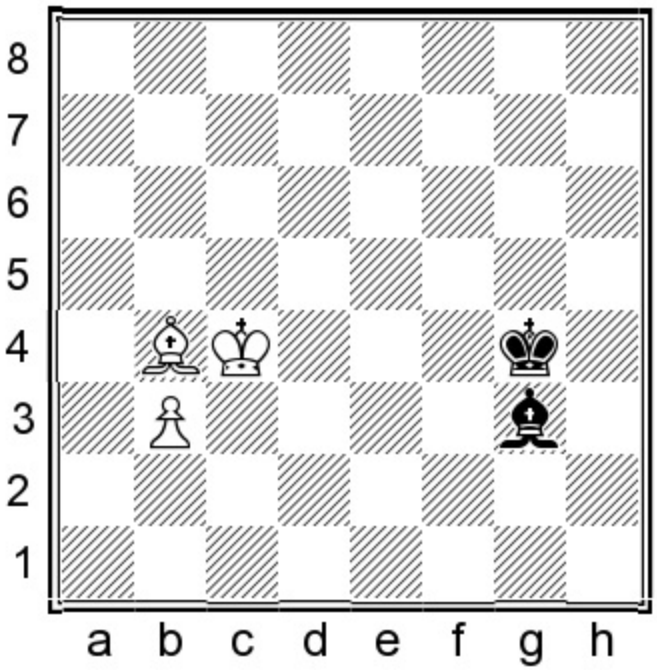


Having exhausted all roundabout paths, White is forced to transpose to the main variation.

75...♗xg3

Finally, the concluding phase has begun. The question is as follows: can the extra pawn be realized, exploiting the remote position of the enemy king? Theory replies in the negative, and for Fischer this was no secret...

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76.♗c3 ♗d6 77.♔d5 ♗e7 78.♗d4 ♗b4! 79.♔c4 ♗a5! 80.♗c3 ♗d8! 81.b4

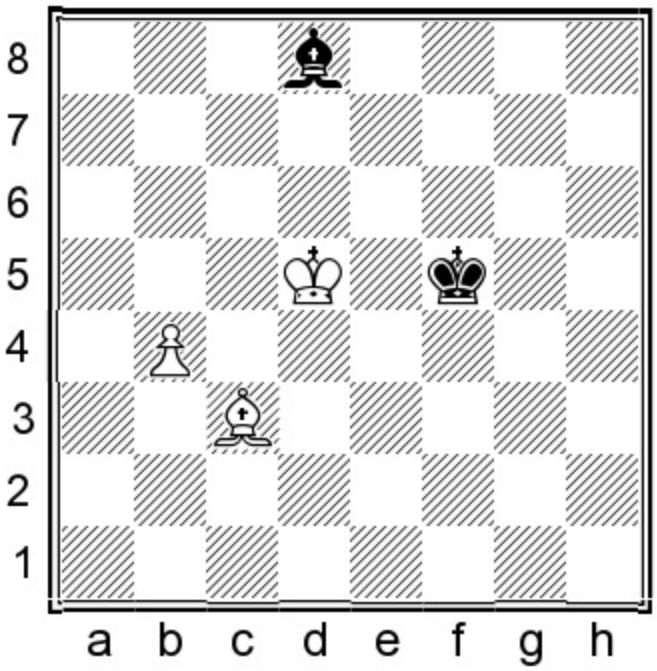
For the time being things are seemingly unfolding well for White – the pawn has safely overcome one critical dark square. But there are still two more ahead...

81...♔f4!

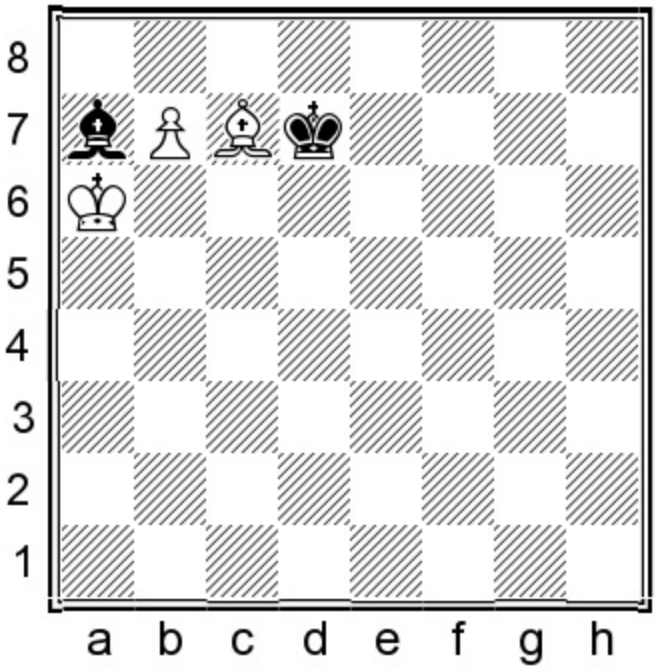
The most clear-cut plan – Fischer does not hesitate to direct his king to the opponent's rear, which is evidence of his deep knowledge of the bishop endgame.

The alternative was the reply 81...♔f5, after which White could with the move 82.♔d5 have led the game into a position that occurred for the first time in the game Capablanca – Janowski from the New York tournament of 1916. This game has a curious history.

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The point is that this position then became the final one. Not doubting the pointlessness of further resistance, Janowski resigned. In explanation of this extraordinary decision there was put forward a multi-move and fairly instructive variation: 1...♗b6 2.♗d4 ♗c7 3.b5 ♗d8 4.♔c6 ♔e6 5.♗b6 ♗g5 6.♗c7 ♗e3 7.♗d6 ♗f2 8.♗c5 ♗g3 9.b6 ♗f4 10.b7 ♗g3 11.♗b6 ♗b8 12.♗c7 ♗a7 13.♔b5 ♔d7 14.♔a6



By driving away the black bishop, White wins. All this appeared logical and convincing at the time, until the experts noticed in this textbook analysis an organic defect – the black king, during the course of the entire concluding phase, played the role of a passive observer and, naturally, a lone bishop could not deal with the methodical offensive of the white pieces.

Meanwhile, as was subsequently shown, the black king could have had a much more active influence on the course of events. Taking account of the fact that on the flank it was cut off from the passed pawn, while from the front – still more so, the only way to take part in the fight consisted in

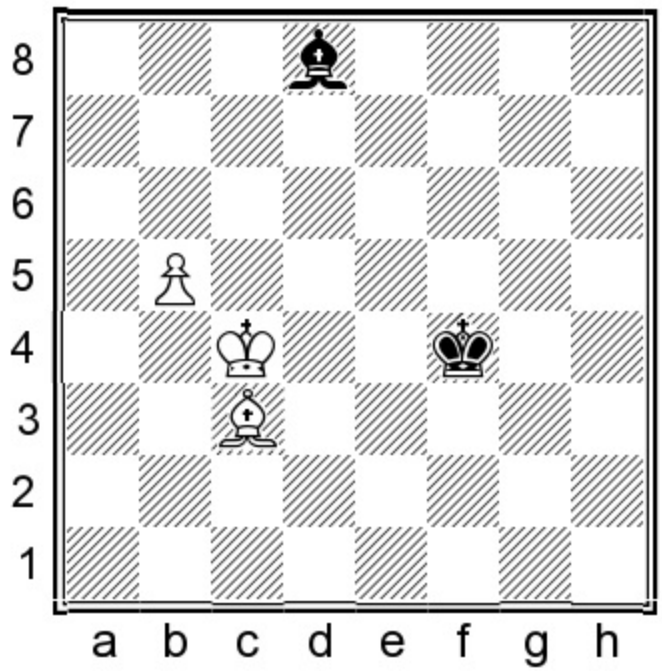
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approaching from the rear. And this plan guaranteed a solution to the problem! And therefore Janowski ought not to have resigned, but in keeping with the demands of the position played 1...♔f4! and after 2.♗d4 (or 2.♗e5† ♔e3 3.b5 ♔d3 4.♔c6 ♔c4!) 2...♔f3! 3.b5 ♔e2! 4.♔c6 ♔d3 5.♗b6 ♗g5 6.♗c7 ♗e3 7.♗d6 ♔c4 the safe advance of the white pawn becomes unrealizable.

Thus, the move 81...♔f5 was also quite possible, but Fischer plays still more accurately!

82.b5

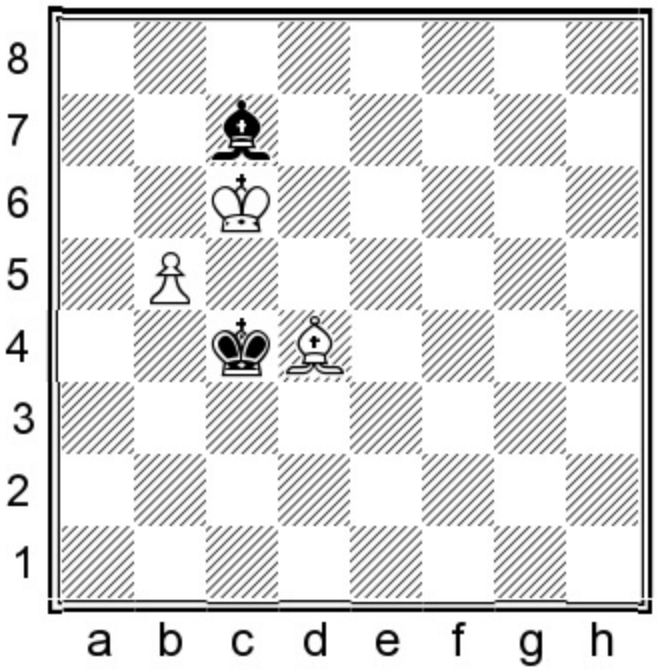
It is now clear that on 82.♔d5 Black would have replied 82...♔e3.



82...♔e4 83.♗d4 ♗c7 84.♔c5 ♔d3! 85.♔c6 ♔c4!

The aim is achieved. White cannot now strengthen the position to support the free advance of the pawn...

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86.♗b6 ♗f4 87.♗a7 ♗c7!

Agreed drawn.

½–½

This is how, in uncompromising, creatively fascinating fashion, my acquaintance with Fischer at the chessboard took place. I admit, many years later, when by the fate of the draw Fischer was determined as my opponent in a match on the path to the chess Olympus, the recollection of this game instilled in me a certain optimism, since throughout the entire course of the duel the initiative had belonged to me, and Fischer did not easily achieve a peaceful outcome.

But nor did I forget the impression made by his exceptional ingenuity in defence and his truly encyclopaedic erudition.

In his youth he knew a great deal, but later Fischer's chess knowledge became simply boundless. His brain, as if specially constructed for chess, contained truly encyclopaedic information. As Botvinnik later noted: "Fischer knew everything that was written about chess, and had been tested on the chessboard." In addition, there was Fischer's memory! I recall an astonishing example. This was in 1971 in the Canadian city of Vancouver. At the official closing of that long-suffering match, Fischer and I sat with colleagues at the ceremonial banqueting table and, after all we had been through, talked peacefully. (Interestingly, we communicated in the Serbian language, the only one that was known to us both.) The topics were, in the main, associated with the match, but at a certain lull my second Evgeny Vasiukov unexpectedly turned to Fischer and said, "Bobby, do you remember how, many years ago, still in the days of our youth, you stayed for a few days in Moscow and played a few blitz games against our chessplayers? I was among your opponents."

"Of course I remember," replied Fischer.

"And the result?" Vasiukov inquired.

"Why only the result?" said a surprised Fischer. "I remember the games themselves. Against you it was a French Defence." And... he quickly recited by heart all of the moves...

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The years of the peak of Robert Fischer's talent were beginning. After the Buenos Aires fiasco he did not again know failure. One victory followed another. In the 19 major tournaments (not counting Olympiads and matches) that Robert Fischer played before the unexpectedly tragic end of his brilliant career, he took 1st place in 15(!) of them! In the 1963 US Championship he defeated everyone!

It has rightly been noted that the better he played – the better he played. It is not surprising that Fischer achieved what was then the highest individual Elo-rating in the history of chess – 2785! Only Kasparov, many years later, managed to surpass this record.

Chess absorbed Fischer completely, and he did not part company with it day or night, feeling a perpetual thirst to analyse games and opening variations, to read chess literature. Fischer even specifically learned the Russian language in order to read our books and magazines in the original, saying that he did not trust translations. Grandmaster E. Gufeld proudly shows off his monograph on the Sicilian Defence, where on the title page there was inscribed a very short and valuable review: "To Gufeld. A very interesting book. Bobby Fischer, 20th December 1970."

I happened to meet Fischer over the course of a decade at competitions, in everyday life, at receptions and picnics, on excursions – and I can swear that I never saw him without a chess set and a chess book. He literally became one with chess, it was his native element, and it was only in it that he breathed freely. And chess reciprocated this devotion. Miguel Najdorf once said: "If you want to achieve success, put chess in first place in your life, but if this is still not enough – put it in second and third as well. This is what Fischer did." And Robert Fischer began to play like no-one else in the world. His style was striking – in its Capablanca-like clarity, in the breadth of strategic ideas, in its overwhelming assertiveness. Anatoly Karpov, who thoroughly studied the artistry of Fischer in the period of preparation for the match with him, and who was the strictest of experts, wrote at the time: "Fischer's games are of the highest fighting intensity (Fischer's uncompromising nature is generally known) – reflecting his universal chess style. In them one can find everything – the sharpest opening set-ups; sparkling attacks; subtle manoeuvring; tenacious defence of difficult positions; the ability to exploit the slightest chance for counterattack; deep, multi-move endgames." While E. Geller added:

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“Indeed Fischer at the chessboard reminds one of an excellently-programmed machine.”

The formative years of Fischer as a chessplayer were, of course, also the formative years of his personality. Alas, here one cannot say that “the style is the person” – at any rate, chess style. The style of Fischer the grandmaster was so much more substantive, bright and diverse than his interests and desires in life. Here are some fragments from an interview at that time:

What interests you besides chess?

– Music, television, radio, sport, going for walks, travel.

And who is your favourite writer?

– I don’t know.

Do you remember anything of Shakespeare?

– I prefer to read newspapers and magazines.

And music?

– I like pop music, and also soul music.

Your plans for the future?

– I have to decide now, either to get married, or to get a car. To have a wife – this is even better than a car.

Why?

– Of course, if this is not an American. Marrying a foreigner would be much better. Firstly, there is no need to bother with the laws of her country. Secondly, if you don’t like her, she can go back home. A car costs more.

Of course, one need not take this interview seriously, but the Yugoslav journalist Dmitri Bjelica, who was then friendly with Fischer, insists that all this is completely true. Admittedly, in somehow criticizing his colleagues, D. Bjelica may have unwittingly betrayed himself: “Journalists sometimes hear from Fischer that which they want to hear from him...” There is another version – Fischer could not stand journalists and simply chose to mystify them...

But, unquestionably, the evolution of Fischer did not, alas, improve his character. Fischer became all the more withdrawn, capricious, dismissive, demanding and arrogant. As a condition for his participation in every tournament he made many demands (in one well-known case there were 43!) that were at times subjective in nature. He did not like to play in large halls, demanding in these cases that the front row be kept free of spectators (“They cough; they belong in a hospital, not at a chess tournament.”), quibbled over the lighting, sometimes even insisting on the refurbishing of the stage, asked for additional fees and for special aircraft flights to be booked for himself. But, most importantly, complexes that had never before declared themselves began to overcome him. In the manner of his behaviour and actions, Fischer showed signs of internal uncertainty, anxiety and suspicion. And although, as previously, he said (as, for example in Los Angeles, in 1970), “I do not

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want to appear immodest, but it would be stupid not to tell the truth – Bobby Fischer is the strongest chessplayer in the world," in so doing he at times sought out superficially plausible reasons and causes for avoiding any kind of tournament or personal encounters. One may recall his lengthy breaks from appearing, and his difficult and painful returns to the chess world.

In those years there also arose for Fischer a 'Russian' complex. Having suffered failure in the Candidates tournament in Curaçao in 1962 (4th place), he began to speak seriously of the "intrigues of Moscow", "Russian collusion" and "secret actions" against him, although even Fischer's biographer Edmar Mednis admitted that the reason for Fischer's disappointing performance was simply his poor play. And the 'Russian' complex gradually began to take the form of an illness. What is this revelation of his worth: "I admit that I do not like aeroplanes. But what if the Russians damaged the engine or did something similar. They attach great significance to chess and are ready to do anything in order to get rid of me..." Grandmaster O'Kelly put it as follows: "Fischer's conduct is reminiscent of the behaviour of a savage – everything that takes place around him he takes as a threat."

It may be that such restless states from time to time and for various reasons overwhelmed Fischer, and led him to take the unexpected decision, in no way in keeping with his entire life programme, of joining a religious sect? But a strange turn of events inclined Fischer still further towards the path of the recluse.

The year 1969 became a difficult one for the American champion. He practically did not appear at all, playing only one serious game and even refusing to participate in the championship of the USA, which formally deprived him of the prospect of taking part in the battle for the world championship. Fischer was in a gloomy state, and the American chess public sounded the alarm – would Fischer turn out to be a new Paul Morphy and withdraw from the world at the zenith of his power? Fortunately, this did not happen. Fischer's talent and his love for chess prevailed in the incipient crisis. For the American grandmaster, the doom and gloom of 1969 was replaced by the sunlight of 1970.

The stimulus was the 'Match of the Century' – the historic competition between the teams of the USSR and the Rest of the World. This was a truly grandiose chess event. It excited chess lovers in every corner of the globe. The newspapers wrote: "There has never before been such an event. The greatest chess thinkers of the world will face one another. Even 50 years from now they will speak of this match." "Never in history will there have been 20 such strong grandmasters on the same stage, among them the World Champion and five ex-Champions!" It was noted that the agreement of Robert Fischer to lead the Rest of the World team was a great surprise. The *New York Times* emphasized: "For everyone in the chess world Bobby Fischer is a mysterious, sullen, temperamental, peculiar, egocentric genius. It was astounding when he accepted the offer to represent the USA in the present match in Belgrade, since the competition is very strong, while for a year and a half Fischer has not played in any tournaments."

Fischer arrived in Belgrade in a gloomy state of mind. He flew in secret, kept apart from everyone, several times changed suites in the luxury hotel and once again put forward countless demands to the organizers, keeping everyone in a state of restlessness and uncertainty. No-one knew how he would behave going into the opening of the event. Information about him on Belgrade radio

was brief and sometimes resembled operational reports: “Fischer has come out of his room” – “Fischer has ordered lunch in the restaurant” – “Fischer is sitting in a taxi”... The agitation of the organizers grew, when suddenly Bent Larsen declared his claim to the 1st board in the Rest of the World team. This was an open challenge to Fischer and, seemingly, a dramatic conflict was inevitable. Would the ambitious grandmaster really sacrifice the prestige? But the unbelievable happened. When Dr Max Euwe, the team captain, dropped in on Fischer and proceeded to his difficult diplomatic mission, Bobby, lying buried in a pillow on the couch, without even turning towards his esteemed colleague, grunted, “I do not object.” He later explained: “Although I know that I am a better player than Larsen, for the last year and a half I had withdrawn from the chess arena, whereas he had performed very successfully and had the moral right for 1st board.” But the solution was not hidden in Fischer’s delicate objectivity, but in his inner uncertainty, sharpened by his long detachment from chess. He was most simply afraid of our leader Boris Spassky, against whom he had a bad score, and he was glad of the opportunity to ‘cede’ him to Larsen. This property of Fischer’s, which two years later had already taken on the form of an illness, was also noted by the psychologist Nikolai Krogius: “Fischer is often described as being a very resolute, fighting chessplayer. This is true only in part. Indeed, when you see Fischer at the board, then reproaches for indecisiveness and uncertainty fall away of their own accord. But before play (especially in important events) he is evidently overwhelmed by hesitation and doubt.”

I recall how at the time, before the beginning of play, not against Spassky but on the 2nd board against Petrosian, Fischer was absolutely not himself. He could not control his nerves, appearing on the stage half an hour late, white as a sheet, not daring to make the first move. It was only when the chess battle dragged him along with its fascination that he gained confidence and his habitual energy. This was a decisive turning point in his condition and, perhaps, these very games became a happy starting milestone on Fischer’s path to the heights of the chess Olympus.

Incidentally, at the same time in Belgrade he gave an interesting interview, filled with sincerity, naïveté, and at the same time, a sense of his own worth. It perhaps reveals more about Fischer than dozens of journalistic articles on him and at any rate contains many unexpected admissions...

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Interviewer: What does chess represent for you; what attracts you most of all to this game?

Fischer: “In chess, I am most of all attracted by the possibility of travelling, of money, of the chess atmosphere. Chess, undoubtedly, is an art, but I don’t think about this. I love chess a great deal, but I am interested in many other things – music, sport, politics. You can live as a chess professional. In no other area could I have achieved what I have achieved in chess. I did not finish school and I am not sure that this was necessary. For a long time I didn’t play in tournaments, but chess gave me the means to live. For the book *Bobby Fischer Teaches Chess* I received ten thousand dollars, for *My 60 Memorable Games* – around half of that amount. Besides this I have a monthly income to the tune of $300 from one youth magazine [And this is all?! And yet journalists would never miss the chance to snipe about Fischer’s commercialism!]. Rumours are spreading about me – that I cannot write, that I demand fees for interviews, that I hate photojournalists, that I put forward impossible conditions. This is not so. I work constantly, I try to be courteous, I do not do everything for money, but I live from chess...”

Interviewer: How do you assess the sporting and creative results of the ‘Match of the Century’?
Fischer: “The match in Belgrade was certainly an epochal event. The idea of taking part in it was very attractive to me. The organization was at a good level and I was completely satisfied with it.”
And in addition: “I intend to get back to playing in tournaments, although I admit that there is a lot against me. I hope to soon become world champion, since in a match I believe once again that I am stronger than anyone.”

Interviewer: What is your opinion of the present system of playing for the world championship?
Fischer: “I have no complaints about the system of Candidates matches, but the matches should be longer, say until six victories, not counting draws. [Even then this idea had struck a chord with Fischer...] In matches I do not fear anyone. A match for the world championship should be played every two years. Larsen and Korchnoi have the best chances in the next match with Spassky. [And where is the notorious self-confidence of Fischer?! 9] Of course, I would have liked things to get as far as a Fischer – Spassky match, but...”

To overcome this “but” took Fischer around a year and a half.

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Having brilliantly overcome Petrosian in the mini-match by 3–1, Fischer stepped up his successes – within a short space of time he won tournaments in Yugoslavia and Argentina and confidently appeared in the Olympiad for the USA team (although there too he put forward 25 demands) and, finally, he demonstrated clear supremacy in the major Interzonal tournament in Spain. This was the height of Fischer's tournament achievements. There he played simply magnificently, and managed to finish 3½ points(!) ahead of his nearest rivals: Efim Geller, Bent Larsen and Robert Hübner.10 Such results had been achieved only by Alexander Alekhine in his best years!

There, in Palma de Mallorca, incidentally, our second meeting at the chessboard took place. At the finish, where Fischer, as if in a single breath, won six games in a row, I, too, as they say, got caught in his crosshairs.

But, I admit, in this duel I only felt Fischer's mighty strength in the concluding phase of the battle, since during virtually all of this tense skirmish – in the opening and also in the middlegame – the strategic initiative had unquestionably belonged to me and only a time-trouble indiscretion on my part disrupted the favourable development of events.

I recall with interest this game, which was fated to be a prologue to the future match.

Robert James Fischer – Mark Taimanov

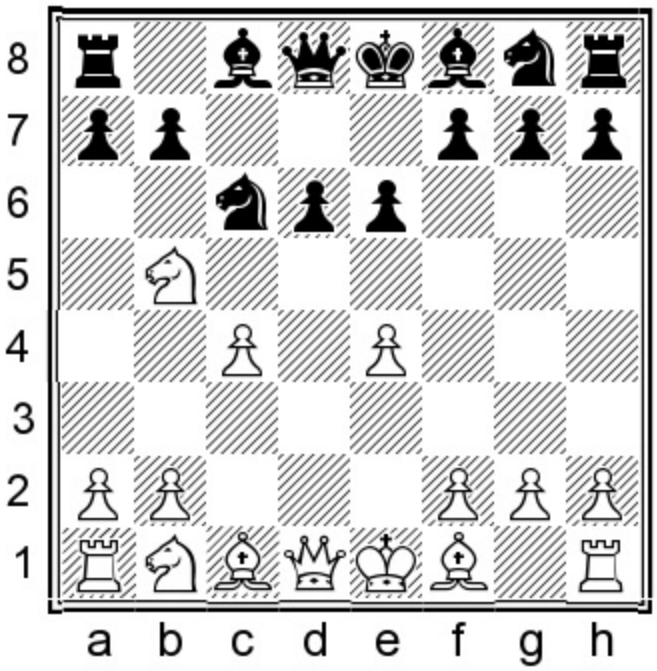
Interzonal Tournament, Palma de Mallorca 1970

Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘b5 d6 6.c4

Fischer values the possession of space, and the opening plan chosen in this encounter he willingly employed over the course of many years, which, naturally, was not a secret to me...

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6...a6 7.♘5c3 ♘f6 8.♗e2 ♗e7 9.0-0 0-0 10.♘a3

The alternative 10.♗e3 ♗d7 11.♘d2 is perhaps less active.

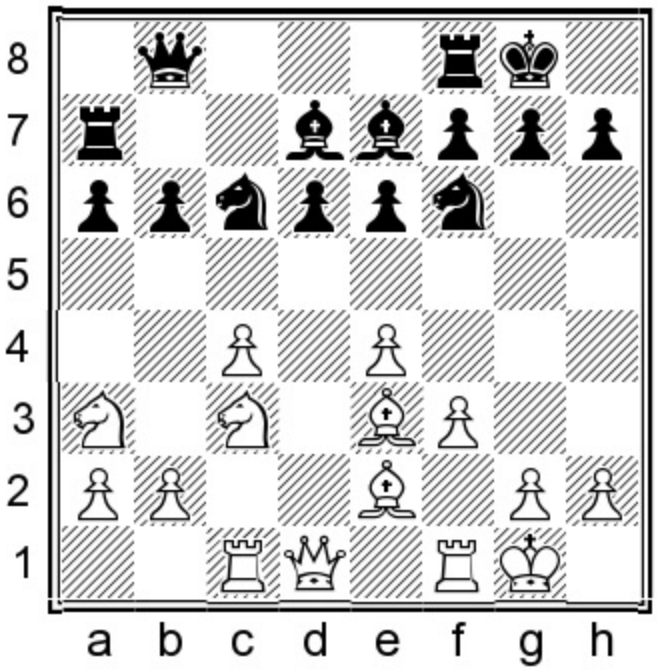
10...b6 11.♗e3 ♗d7

Once again, as in our first encounter, a principled strategic debate begins already in the opening stage. This variation of the Sicilian Defence was very popular in those years, and each player upholds with conviction their treatment of it.

12.♖c1 ♕b8 13.f3 ♖a7

For the time being events unfold in the spirit of unhurried positional manoeuvring. The sides deploy their forces in keeping with the character of the chosen set-up, for the preparation of programmed operations – for White this is piece activation in the centre; for Black, counterplay on the queen's flank.

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14.♘c2

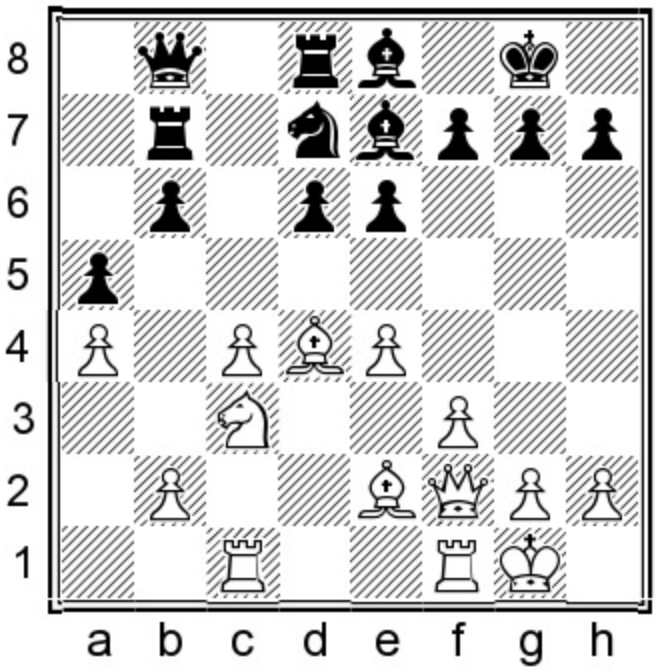
An interesting moment. According to theory, the position of the white knight on a3 is very useful from the point of view of preventing Black's eventual undermining move ...b6-b5. And Fischer, of course, knew this very well. But the dislocation of even one of his pieces on the edge of the board is fundamentally alien to his classical positional instinct. And therefore, giving preference to general considerations to the detriment of concrete ones, he transfers the knight from the flank to the centre and... facilitates the creation of counterplay by Black.

14...♖d8 15.♕e1 ♗e8 16.♕f2 ♖b7 17.a4

Here is the direct consequence of the removal of the knight from the flank. Since White cannot permit the undermining move ...b6-b5, he has to go in for the weakening of squares in his camp.

17...a5! 18.♘d4 ♘xd4 19.♗xd4 ♘d7

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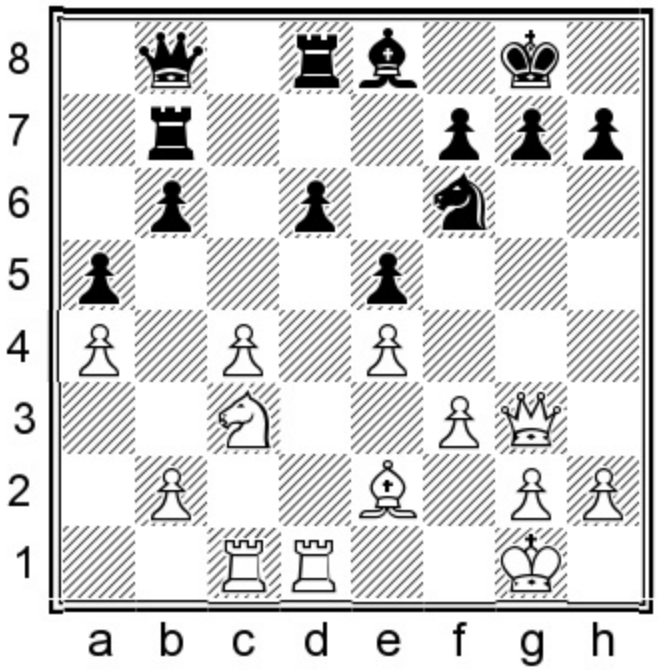


The opening is concluded and one may sum up the first results of the theoretical discussion. They are clearly favourable for Black. Although his position, as previously, remains cramped, his pieces are harmoniously mobilized, while the presence of strong squares on the queen's flank guarantees the possibility of active operations. White undoubtedly has his trumps – an advantage in space, a bridgehead on the square b5 for the knight and eventual pressure on the backward d6-pawn, but for the time being the coordination of his forces has not been arranged, and for now it is not a simple matter to carry out concrete plans for the real activation of his pieces.

20.♕g3 ♗f6 21.♗xf6 ♘xf6 22.♖fd1 e5!

I admit I am proud of this unstereotyped move. Its strategic aim is highly consistent: Black does not fear giving up control over the d5-square, since when White sooner or later hoists his knight onto this square, it will be possible to advantageously exchange it with the bishop from the c6-square and then control over the dark squares permits the activation of the f6-knight, while White's bishop remains captive in its own camp. It will be very difficult to get at the backward d6-pawn.

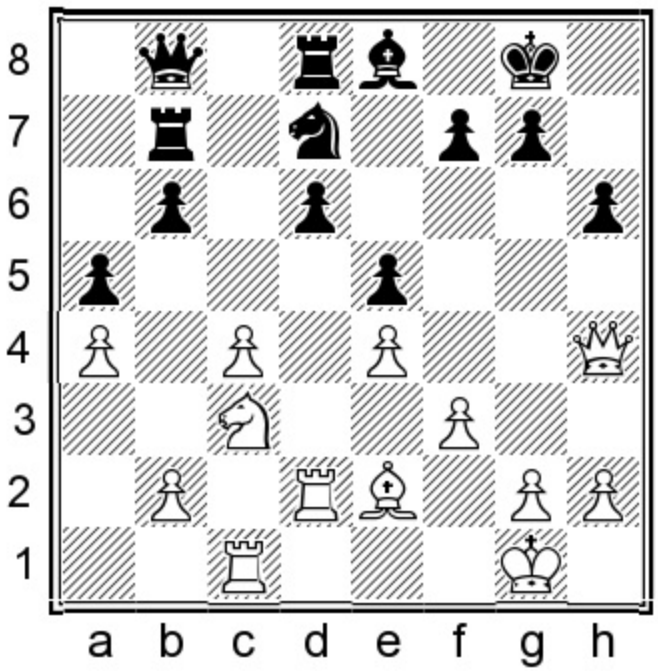
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23.♕h4!

Fischer is equal to the challenge that has arisen! Sensing that the strategic picture of the battle is not developing to his advantage, he begins to seek out a way to oppose the opponent's plans tactically. First and foremost, Fischer prevents the transfer of the enemy knight to the queen's flank, since on 23...♘d7 there is now the blow 24.♖xd6!.

23...h6 24.♖d2 ♘d7



25.♗d1!

Fischer is playing very attentively. First of all he transfers the bishop onto the diagonal d1-a4, where in the event of 25...♘c5 it will both defend the weak pawn and cover the b3-square against an

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eventual invasion by the knight.

Fischer is not tempted by the variation 25.♖xd6 ♕xd6 26.♕xd8, since after 26...♖b8 the white queen does not have the retreat to g5, while after 27.♕h4 ♕d2! there is the risk of coming under attack by the black pieces.

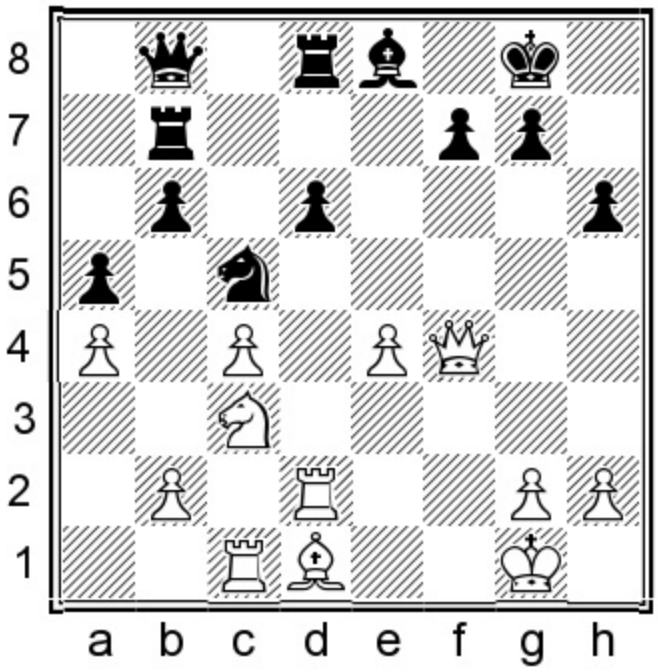
25...♘c5 26.f4!

Once again very characteristic of Fischer. Not wanting to passively await the further activation of the opponent's game with 26...♗c6 or 26...♘e6, he abruptly changes the character of the struggle, even at the cost of a weakening of his position.

26...exf4 27.♕xf4

The critical moment of the battle. Up to this point I had succeeded in consistently carrying out a 'dark-square' strategy and, despite the resourcefulness of my mighty opponent, had taken firm possession of the initiative. Continuing now, in the spirit of blockade, 27...♖e7 28.♗c2 ♖e5, it was possible to consolidate all the pluses of my position and look to the future with optimism.

But approaching time trouble introduced its adjustments to the logic of events...



27...♘e6?

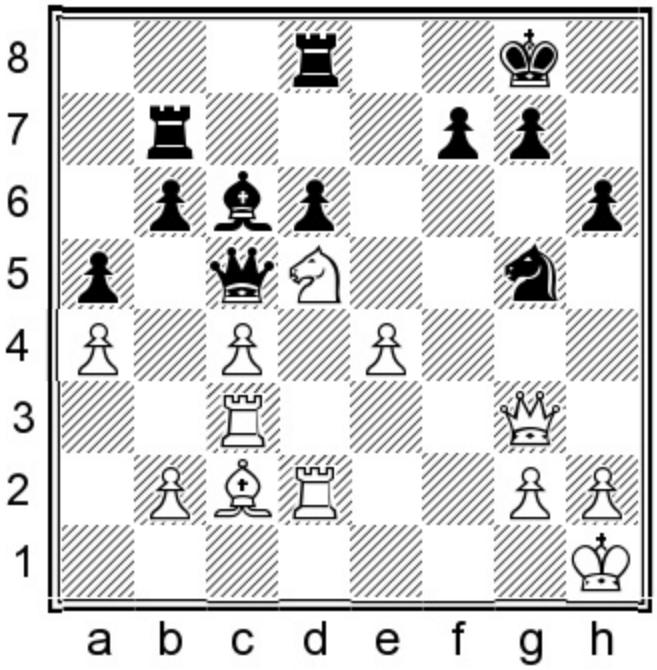
With a single move Black destroys the fruits of all his previous strategy. The painstakingly-created coordination of forces loses its harmony.

28.♕g3 ♕c7 29.♘d5 ♕c5† 30.♔h1 ♗c6 31.♖c3! ♘g5 32.♗c2

How sharply the picture of battle has changed within just a few moves! As if gaining their second wind, all of Fischer's pieces have occupied favourable positions and there is tangible discomfort in

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Black's camp.



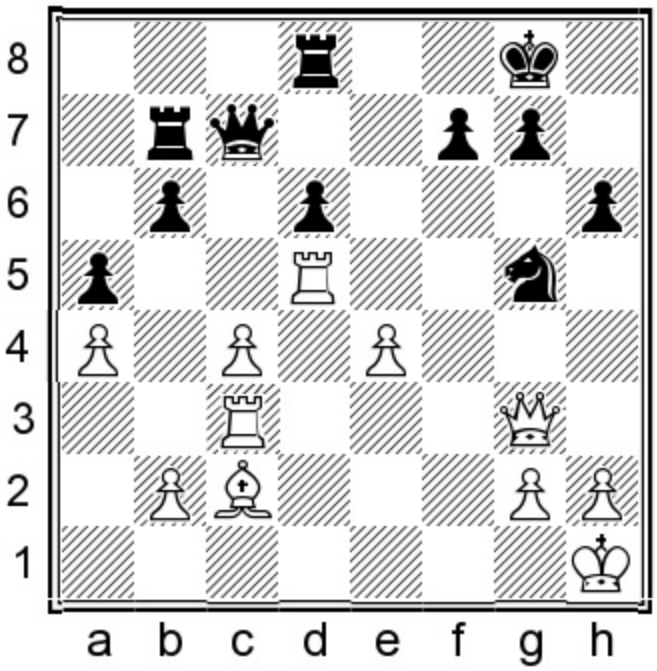
32...♗xd5

I remember that into my plans came first and foremost a siege of the isolated e4-pawn, but on closer examination this plan proved to be illusory. On the move 32...♖e8 White would have replied by means of 33.h4, and 33...♘xe4 will not do in view of 34.♗xe4 ♖xe4 35.♘f6†.

And therefore the retreat had to be sounded.

33.♖xd5 ♕c7

Alas, 33...♕b4 is bad in view of 34.♖b5.



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34.e5!

Fischer is in his element! Having seized the initiative, he develops it with maximal energy.

34...dxe5 35.♕xe5

All of White's pieces have started playing at once. Even the bishop, for which not so long ago it seemed a sad fate had been prepared, has gained complete freedom.

35...♖db8

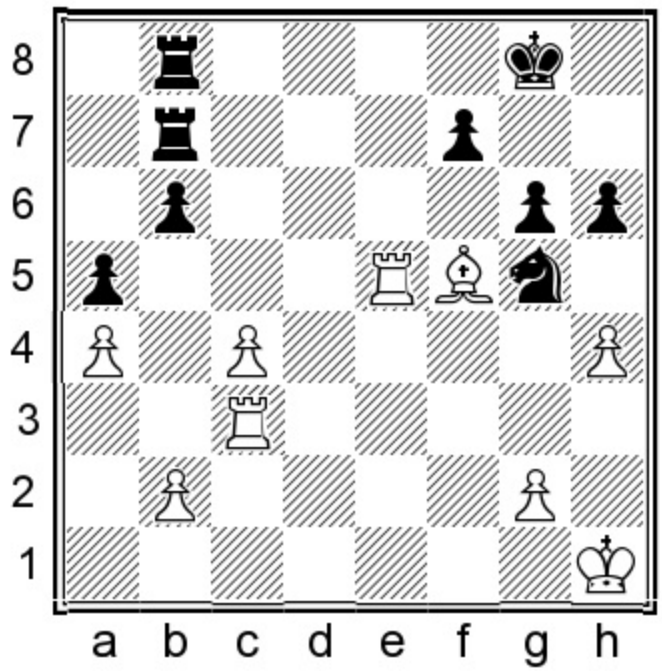
One can experience disappointment and confusion due to a sudden turnaround on the board, but there was still no basis for panic.

Of course, neither 35...♕xe5? nor 35...♖xd5? will do on account of mate on the back rank, but the defensive manoeuvre 35...♘e6! still permitted the position to be consolidated safely.

36.♗f5!

Now the knight is cut off from the main theatre of events and Black's situation already becomes dangerous.

36...♕xe5 37.♖xe5 g6 38.h4!



38...♘h7

And to think that not so long ago this knight was proudly flaunting itself on the c5-square... After its capitulatory withdrawal to the edge of the board the fate of the battle is virtually sealed.

Meanwhile, the possibility of holding the position still remained for Black. By continuing 38...f6! 39.♖b5 gxf5 40.hxg5 hxg5 41.♖xf5 ♔g7 he would have forcibly transposed play into a rook endgame where, despite his passive position, he had sufficient defensive resources.

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39.♗g4 ♘f6 40.♗f3 ♖d7?

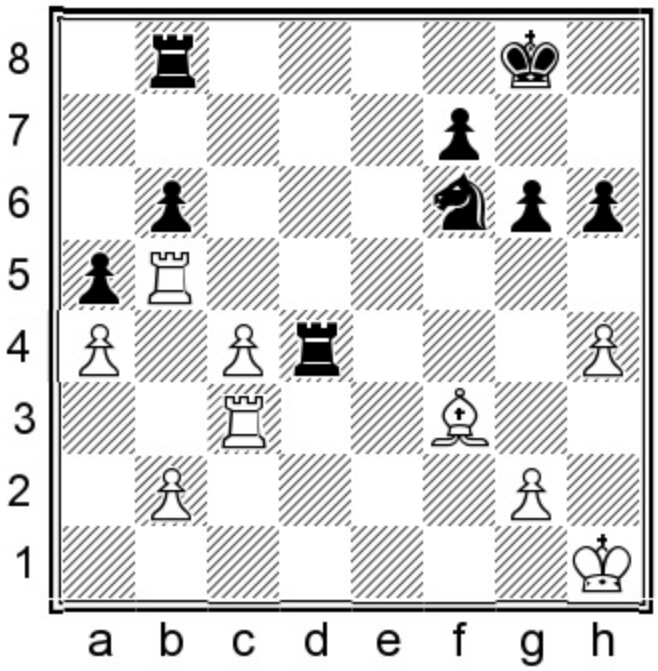
The final move in time trouble and already a decisive mistake.

Black ought to have immediately played 40...♖c7, leaving the d7-square free for the knight.

41.♖b5 ♖d4

The sealed move. 11

Possibly, the modest 41...♖dd8 would have been more tenacious.



42.c5!

Fischer energetically and decisively exploits the advantages of his situation. Creating a passed pawn, he forces victory.

After analysis we still had hopes of salvation in the event of the tempting 42.h5. Then there would have followed 42...g5 43.c5 ♖e8! 44.cxb6 g4 45.b7 gxf3 46.b8=♕ f2! 47.♕g3† ♘g4 48.♖c1 ♖e3 49.♕h4 ♖de4 with a draw after 50.♖g5† hxg5 51.♕xg5†. But Fischer had also seen this...

42...♖xh4† 43.♔g1 ♖b4 44.♖xb4!

The most clear-cut path, undoubtedly determined during home analysis.

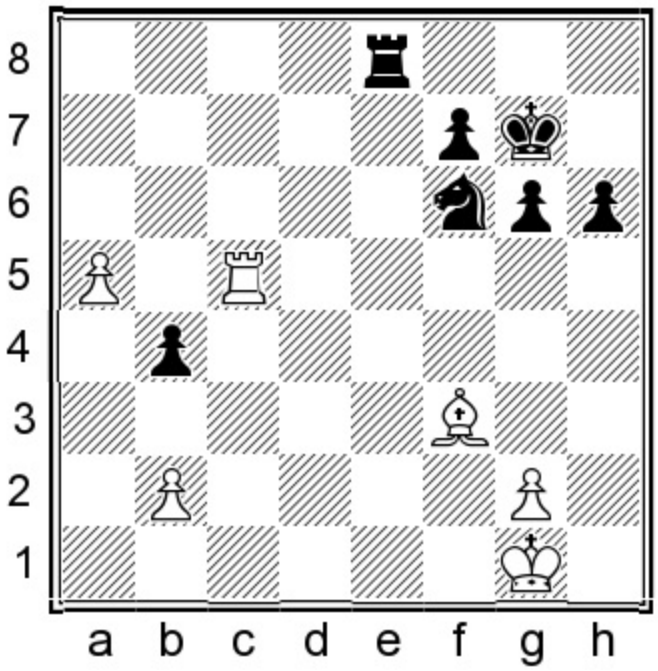
In the case of the tempting 44.♖b3 ♖xb3 45.♖xb3 ♘d7 46.c6 ♘e5 47.♗d5 ♖c8 48.♖xb6 ♔f8 White's task becomes markedly more complicated.12

44...axb4 45.♖c4 bxc5 46.♖xc5 ♔g7 47.a5

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This pawn, supported by the long-range bishop, is irresistible.

47...♖e8



48.♖c1!

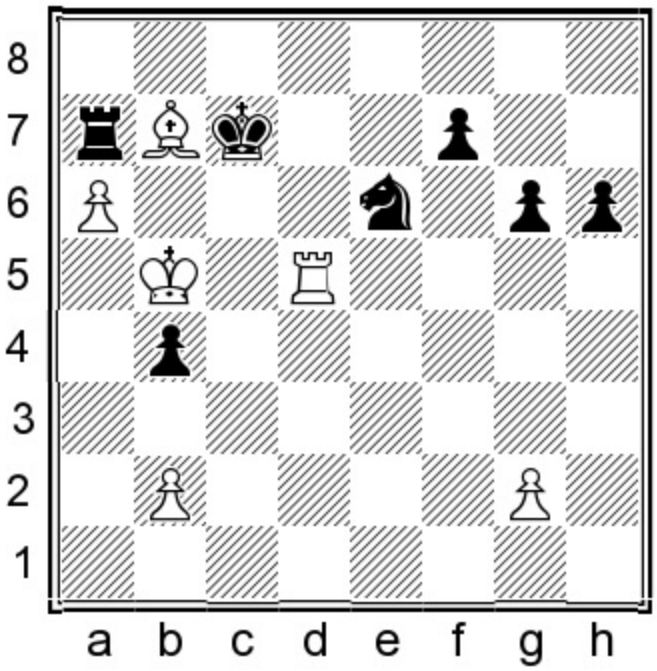
A textbook manoeuvre! The rook best of all facilitates the advance of its ‘candidate for promotion’ from the deep rear.

48...♖e5 49.♖a1 ♖e7 50.♔f2

The march of the white king to the queen’s flank puts the final dot over the ‘i’.

50...♘e8 51.a6 ♖a7 52.♔e3 ♘c7 53.♗b7 ♘e6 54.♖a5! ♔f6 55.♔d3 ♔e7 56.♔c4 ♔d6 57.♖d5† ♔c7 58.♔b5

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And I resigned.

1–0

A tense battle! In its concluding phase Fischer was simply magnificent!

For the first time in my own career I experienced the special ‘Fischer attributes’ about which I had earlier heard from colleagues. As soon as he sensed the appearance in the opponent of even the slightest downturn in energy, of fatigue or internal demobilization, he instantly concentrated all of his efforts and began to conduct the fight with redoubled will to win, extracting the maximum possible from the situation that had arisen on the board. Amusingly, this incredible energy of Fischer’s, and the ‘force field’ that he radiated, sometimes found a supernatural explanation. Lightweight journalists sometimes tried to ascribe to Fischer some special attributes; mystical methods acting on the opponent’s psyche. One German correspondent in all seriousness wrote about the match for the world championship: “The secret emanations coming from Fischer constantly envelop his opponent, paralysing his thoughts and will. He cannot rid himself of a feeling, as if some kind of invisible vampire is drinking glasses of his blood.” Well! Bobby then had to defend himself against such ludicrous attacks: “What does psychological murder have to do with it? You simply have to find the strongest move in any position. I do feel satisfaction when I manage to gain a moral victory over my opponent, but I achieve this not with the help of some kind of spell, but much more simply: I come, I sit down at the board and... I win!”

And furthermore. When Fischer was playing well, he was simply irresistible, as if drawing inspiration from his own successes. He showed himself to be like this many times. Such was his magnificent finishing spurt in the tournament in Palma de Mallorca. Who could have imagined that this tournament would prove to be the last in the career of the 27-year-old Bobby Fischer...

But matches still lay ahead. And in these, Fischer showed himself to be just as irresistible. As if picking up the speed that he had gained at the finish of the Interzonal tournament, where he had won

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seven games in a row – Fischer remorselessly crushed the Candidates for the chess crown – in the quarter-final match, me (of which we will speak later), and in the semi-final – B. Larsen – in both cases with the sensational result 6–0! And if each of Fischer's opponents had their own reasons and explanations for their failure, such a rout was evidence in itself of the unquestioned superiority of the victor. Fischer summed up modestly: "I simply played more accurately than Taimanov and Larsen. They made mistakes, and I exploited them." But in fact, he played incomparably!

Fischer's duel with Tigran Petrosian turned out to be a more dogged affair, at least after Game 1, when Bobby, having gained his twentieth victory in a row, seemingly became complacent. But here too, with an unbelievable finish – four wins against the 'impenetrable' Tigran, Fischer gained the desired victory.

The path to the long-awaited match for the world championship against Boris Spassky had been opened up. Seemingly, it would be a matter of "forward, without hesitation or doubt"! Fischer had never before had such a happy period. But things went by no means smoothly. The match almost did not happen... And once again, for the umpteenth time, the reason was the internal uncertainty of Fischer; the fear of failure, of defeat, of the frustration of his hopes. It is well known that Napoleon, speaking of Marshall Masséna, noted that he was unable to pull himself together internally before battle, and displayed the inherent qualities of a great commander only once the cannons had begun to fire. The general opinion was that such a weakness was also characteristic of Fischer. The more so if he was faced with competing against a 'difficult' opponent. And Boris Spassky was the only rival against whom Fischer had lost all three of the decisive games they had played. And so it began. Once again additional demands, conditions, protests – the whole set of 'buffer' measures. The match was set, its location and dates established, the World Champion Boris Spassky had already arrived in Reykjavík with his delegation, while of the Challenger there was no news at all. The confusion was universal. Admittedly, in newspapers there appeared reports that the day before – the 30th June – Fischer had gone to the airport in New York, where 14 places had been reserved for him and those accompanying him. At the time N. Krogius, one of Spassky's seconds, said it was known that Fischer had loaded his luggage onto the aeroplane but, on learning that he would not be guarded by police, he had unexpectedly changed his mind. After waiting for an hour, he had unloaded his luggage. Then Fischer himself had disappeared without trace. He did not arrive in Reykjavík on 1st July...

Such a situation was unknown in the history of chess, and perhaps this would not have gone unpunished with anyone else. Only Fischer was to be forgiven for everything and... by everyone. Thus, on this occasion he was forgiven by the president of Iceland, by ministers, ambassadors, the president of FIDE, the world champion – Fischer did not honour them with his presence at the official opening ceremony of the match. For the sake of Fischer the official drawing of lots was postponed for more than a week(!) at the start of the match. And although Fischer then found the courage to admit his tactlessness, officially writing to him: "Dear Boris, Please accept my sincerest apology for my disrespectful behavior in not attending the opening ceremony... I have offended you and your country, the Soviet Union, where chess has a prestigious position." – the match, from its first days, was doomed to having a nervous background. After having started, the duel was again interrupted – Fischer simply did not appear for the second game, which cost him a whole point, and the organizers – new anxiety and worries. For the third game, the American demanded to play not in the main hall,

but in a closed room, and with an ultimatum threatened to pull out of the match. And... he got everything that he wanted!

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Employment at All-Time High

PART I, PAGE 2

COMPLETE N.Y. STOCKS

Los Angeles Times

FRIDAY
LATE FINAL

VOL. XCI FIVE PARTS—PART ONE ★★★ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1972 98 PAGES DAILY 10¢

Mitchell Denies Any Link to Bugging

PART I, PAGE 2

FISCHER IS KING

Stocks Jump

NEW YORK (AP)—The stock market sent Wall Streeters off on their Labor Day weekend in a good mood, staging a rally amid light trading. The Dow Jones industrials closed up 6.32 at 970.05.

Details in Part 2, Page 12

$1 Billion U.S. Sales Accord Reached by Nixon, Tanaka

HONOLULU (AP)—President Nixon and Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka today pledged joint efforts to bring trade between the two countries into better balance. In a communique announcement, the governments disclosed Japanese plans to purchase $1 billion-plus of U.S. goods and services to help ease pressure on the dollar.

In the seven-point statement, Tanaka and Mr. Nixon also went on record as hoping that the prime minister's forthcoming visit to Peking would "serve to further the trend for relaxation of tension in Asia."

No Mention of Taiwan

The 12-point statement made no mention of Taiwan. However, it said Mr. Nixon and Tanaka "reaffirmed the intention of the two governments to maintain the treaty of mutual cooperation and security between the two countries."

The communique announcement, put out by White House Press Secretary Ronald Ziegler, ended a series of short-term agreements to reduce Japan's mounting surplus in commercial dealings with the United States.

There was mention of Japanese purchases of agricultural, forestry and fishery products, jet airliners and uranium enrichment services.

After landing Saturday in Tanaka, Mr. Nixon was to head by Hickman Air Force base near Honolulu to participate in change of command ceremonies for U.S. forces in the Pacific. Adm. Noel Gayler is succeeding Adm. John S. McCain Jr.

Back to San Clemente

Then it was back to the Western White House in San Clemente, where the President plans to remain until Tuesday before flying back to Washington with a brief stop to dedicate a park near San Francisco.

American and Japanese officials had worked far into the humid Hawaiian night to complete work on the joint statement, an outline of which was drafted even before the two leaders arrived in this island state on Thursday.

The work continued even as Mr. Nixon and Tanaka, joined by 12 Japanese and U.S. officials, dined on Hawaiian fish, prime beef and California wine at an informal dinner Thursday night.

Mr. Nixon described his talks with the new Japanese leader as "substantive, constructive and positive."

He said the United States and the Tanaka government, installed barely two months ago, were working toward solutions of outstanding differences and added: "We are certainly off to a good start."

Tanaka responded by referring to what he called the "friendly spirit" of the dinner, saying this reflected "a close, cordial relationship."





THE LOSER AND THE WINNER—Boris Spassky, left, surrendered world chess title to Bobby Fischer this morning when he telephoned his resignation in 21st game. At right, Fischer leaves hall in Reykjavik after the wild applause of client on hand for the coronation.



HILO HUG—Pat Nixon gives a hug to tiny hula dancer who wanted to reach her the steps at luau given in Hilo, Hawaii.



PISTOL AT HER HEAD—Gunman holds Sheila Eadie hostage in New York re robbery attempt. Bandit was later killed by police as he tried to flee after a detective took woman's place in a car.

Spassky Quits by Telephone in 21st Game

REYKJAVIK (UPI)—Bobby Fischer, whose bold style and capricious temperament forced the world to take a new look at the ancient game of chess, today became world chess champion in an anticlimactic telephoned resignation from Russia's Boris Spassky in the 21st game.

In typical fashion, the new champion was late for his own coronation.

Spassky called arbiter Lothar Schmid to resign less than two hours before the scheduled resumption of the 21st game which was adjourned in Fischer's favor after 40 moves Thursday.

The Russian grandmaster had spent the night analyzing the game in futile search of a way to save a draw and his title.

The title was worth $156,250 in prize money to Fischer. Spassky's share was to be $93,750.

Suit Still to Be Settled

Still to be resolved, however, was the $1.75 million breach of contract lawsuit filed by movie producer Chester Fox against Fischer, whose protests prevented cameras from filming the games.

Schmid and International Chess Federation president Max Euwe, the last non-Russian to hold the championship, hastily arranged a coronation ceremony in the playing hall.

They raced to Fischer's hotel to tell him he was the new world champion. Fischer asked for confirmation of his victory in settling from Spassky.

With the game still on the chessboard from Thursday night, Schmid returned to his desk and waited. Fischer charged in 16 minutes late.

Exhibits Shyness

A crowd of several hundred who had come thinking they would see Fischer, burst into wild applause and shouted, "Bobby, Bobby."

Fischer, the first American ever to win the title, looked shy for the first time in the marathon duel and quietly toyed with his fountain pen.

Schmid moved forward to the edge of the stage and announced:

"Ladies and gentlemen, Mr. Spassky resigned game 21 by telephone to me at 12:30 p.m. This is a legal way to resign. Mr. Fischer has won the 21st game and is winner of the world championship match."

The crowd went wild, standing in the seats, shouting, cheering, screaming. Fischer looked out at the crowd, then down at his feet, walked over to sign his scoresheet and almost ran out.

Fischer, whose 24-hour Sabbath began at sundown, returned to his hotel and closed himself in his room.

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And if it can be explained why Fischer was indulged by the president of FIDE and the organizers – he was not only an outstanding chessplayer, but also the sole Western opponent of the 'Russian chess hegemony' – then Spassky's humility is simply astonishing. He himself admitted that he had ceded the psychological initiative to his opponent, essentially predetermining his general capitulation as well. Spassky had clearly forgotten or underestimated the insidious strategy once expressed by Fischer: "I see my main task as being to crush the opponent's ego", and to a certain extent this ultimately determined the outcome of the dramatic struggle. The match ended ahead of schedule. Already after the 21st game Fischer had gained the necessary 12½ points.

1st September 1972 marked the 'date of birth' of the 11th World Champion! Robert Fischer's finest hour had come. America was jubilant – for the first time in history the chess throne belonged to an American (if you discount Steinitz, who was Austrian born, but played under the American flag). His popularity became so enormous that it was said that had Fischer presented his candidature for President of the United States, he would have had every chance of success. The pilgrimage of his fans to Reykjavík began, agreements for appearances, tours and filming were signed. But, unsurprisingly, Fischer did not care at all for this. He was only interested in chess. Eyewitnesses said that even at the most triumphant moment of his career, when Max Euwe crowned Fischer with the laurel wreath, he smiled but was seemingly impatient for the moment when all these procedures would be over and he could return to the board and continue the analysis of the final game, which was already history as far as everyone else was concerned, but not for him.

In those days Fischer received congratulations from Richard Nixon, with an invitation to a celebratory event at the White House. The mayor of New York, Mr Lindsay, declared Friday 22nd September 'Fischer Day', and got ready to conduct parades to the glory of the champion. But Fischer, having read the flattering invitations and the programmes of these encounters, rejected both Nixon and Lindsay. "Too many speeches are planned there, and already I don't have enough time to work on chess." Who else, besides Fischer, could not only think this, but also do it?!

Seemingly, in the chess world the 'Fischer era' was beginning. The older generation already could not compete with him, and from the younger generation no-one had yet seriously made their claim. In addition, Fischer himself was convinced of the invulnerability of his throne. When Max Euwe suggested that Fischer would retain the title of World Champion for three cycles – nine years – the self-confident Bobby even took offence: "Does Euwe really think that I will die so soon?"

Fischer had the widest plans. He declared that he wanted and was ready to play a match not every three years, but every year against any chessplayer who, of course, could secure worthy financial conditions. He promised Spassky a return match: "It was very interesting to play against you," said Fischer. "Thank you for a great battle." He wanted to change much in the chess world. But fate turned out differently...

The 21st game of the match with Spassky, played by Fischer on 31st August 1972, turned out to be the last official game in his career...

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At first there was nothing foretelling the drama, although Fischer's total indifference to his proud new status was surprising. In his life it was as if nothing had changed. Fischer had retired to quiet Pasadena? This sort of thing had often happened before. He had lost himself in religion? Also not new. Started a lawsuit against financial wrongdoers? Naturally.

For all these circumstances, he all the same lived only for chess. Even when the World Champion shied away from appearing at the tournament in San Antonio, and then went to Manila only as a high-ranking state guest, this still did not provoke the concern of the chess world – Fischer's whole career had been accompanied by lengthy breaks from play. The first puzzling symptom was his refusal to participate in the Olympiad. The Americans expected to see their idol at the head of their national team. Knowing his whims, they promised him anything he wanted. But they came up against stubborn opposition. Fischer did not want to play. This was alarming. But the chess world got genuinely excited when shortly before the next scheduled official match for the world championship, where Fischer was to defend his honoured title, the American grandmaster unexpectedly made a demand... a fundamental revision of the rules of such an event, that had been approved and withstood decades of testing. Moreover, amongst the almost 60 points in Fischer's petition, the main one was the unrealistic demand that the new match would be played without any limit on the number of games, until ten victories, while with a score of 9–9 the match would be stopped with the World Champion retaining the title and all his privileges. That is, in order to overthrow the World Champion it would be necessary not only to play an astronomical number of games, but also to gain, as a minimum, two victories more than him... This was too much. All those who knew Fischer understood that he was simply looking in advance for a convenient way not to lose his dignity, but to shirk his direct duties as champion and to decently avoid the match.

It was known that lengthy periods of seclusion always awakened in Fischer a complex of uncertainties and disquiet, but this time the doubts had taken on a particularly morbid form. The compatriots of the World Champion, Robert Byrne and Larry Evans, both openly opposed Fischer's demands for the 1975 match. Byrne, for instance, wrote: "What cripples Fischer is his belief that winning a chess game means crushing his opponent's ego and, consequently, the same psychic damage is in store for him should he lose." The nature of Fischer's anxieties lay in the fact that the right to the match against Fischer had been gained by the young Anatoly Karpov – a person absolutely unknown to him, and whom he still did not understand as a chessplayer – and this made

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Bobby very nervous.

Fischer's new conflict with FIDE took on sharp form. Common sense objected to the demands of the champion, while the champion stubbornly stood his ground.

Events developed quickly, and since they were associated with Fischer's final days on the chess throne, they deserve documented accuracy. The chronicle of those times contains many intrigues and genuinely dramatic details. We will follow them in chronological order:

21st June 1974

Fischer sends an 800-word telegram to FIDE, reiterating his demands, but this time with the tone of an ultimatum.

27th June

He sends a further despatch:

To FIDE President Max Euwe

Mr Kramer has advised me that my wishes in connection with the match have been refused. In acting this way, FIDE has come out against my participation in a match for the title in 1975. Therefore I renounce the title of World Champion. Sincerely, Bobby Fischer.

The reply of 30th June reads:

To Bobby Fischer, Pasadena, USA

Your professionalism, fighting spirit and exceptional mastery inspired everyone in the years when you were fighting for the title of Champion. The General Assembly of FIDE proposes that you re-examine the possibility of defending the title under the conditions that are adopted here. Only in a match will you be able to demonstrate to the world your true and high qualities.
With Greetings from the General Assembly of FIDE.

No reply from Fischer followed...

The following stage was that of newspaper announcements:

Bergen, 20th March 1975

The Extraordinary Congress of FIDE has accepted, by 37 votes to 33, the first of Fischer's requests, that the match Fischer – Karpov should be played without limit on the number of games. But 35 votes against 32, a majority of 3, rejected the World Champion's request that he should retain the title with the result 9–9.

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Boris Quits and Bobby Is the Champ



Associated Press Wirephoto

Referee Lothar Schmid of West Germany congratulates new chairman of the board, Bobby Fischer, in Reykjavik, Iceland.

A Sealed 41st Move by Spassky Seals His Own Doom

By ROBERT BYRNE
Special Correspondent of The News

Reykjavik, Iceland, Sept. 1—Bobby Fischer of Brooklyn is world chess champion, the first American to hold that title since it was established in 1866.

This morning when it was announced that Russian Boris Spassky had resigned the 21st game, adjourned since last night, the world chess championship title passed out of Russian hands for the first time in 25 years.

The 29-year-old Fischer is to receive $156,000 in prize money for taking the match, and can count on many thousands more from book royalties, endorsements, personal appearances and the like.

Spassky, 35, will receive about $100,000. He won only three games, one on a forfeit. Fischer won seven games, and there were 11 draws. With a win counting one point, and a draw a half point, the final score was 12½ for Fischer and 8½ for Spassky.

Spassky phoned his resignation to match referee Lothar Schmid at 12:50 p.m. Reykjavik time (8:50 a.m., New York time), and Schmid announced it in the crowded playing hall nearly two hours later, a little after the 21st game was to resume.

Schmid turned, spotted Bobby's chess and tried to lead him to the front of the stage to acknowledge the cheers and applause of the crowd. But Fischer shyly ducked back to the playing table and bowed over to sign his score sheet. A few minutes later he left the hall as quickly as he had entered.

So ended the match of the century. Many were disappointed that Spassky did not show up to resign in person. However, referee Schmid pointed out that the Russian's telephoned resignation was proper and sanctioned by international chess custom.

Frank Skaff, newly elected president of the United States Chess Federation, said, "I wish Boris had played it out. He still had some chance and I wanted to see how it would go."

The opinions of the grandmasters fluctuated until game time. Max Euwe, former world champ-

(Continued on page 4, col. 1)

Tass Tardy On Bad News

Moscow, Sept. 1 (UPI)—The official Soviet news agency Tass, which reported Boris Spassky's wins within minutes, waited more than two hours today to report that the Russian lost the world chess championship to Bobby Fischer.

"His decision was taken after an analysis showed further white resistance was futile," Tass said of Spassky's resignation without resuming the adjourned 21st game.

Robert Byrne is an international chess grandmaster.



Associated Press photo

Boris Spassky
Champ wasn't good enough

A Quick Summary of Match

Reykjavik, Iceland, Sept. 1 (UPI)—The Boris Spassky-Bobby Fischer world chess championship games at a glance. The Russian played white in the opening game and they alternated after that.

Date	Game	Result
July 11	1	Nimzo-Indian defense. Fischer resigned on 56th move.
July 13	2	Spassky won on forfeit when Fischer failed to appear.
July 16	3	Semi-Slavonic. Spassky resigned on his 40th move.
July 18	4	Sicilian defense. Draw in 41 moves.
July 20	5	Nimzo-Indian defense. Spassky resigned in 28 moves.
July 23	6	Queen's gambit orthodox defense. Spassky resigned in 41 moves.
July 25	7	Sicilian defense. Draw in 49 moves.
July 27	8	English defense. Spassky resigned in 37 moves.
Aug. 1	9	Semi-Tarrasch defense. Draw in 30 moves.
Aug. 3	10	Ruy Lopez. Spassky resigned in 36 moves.
Aug. 6	11	Sicilian defense. Fischer resigned in 21 moves.
Aug. 8	12	Queen's gambit orthodox. Draw in 56 moves.
Aug. 10	13	Alekhine defense. Spassky resigned after 23 moves.
Aug. 13	14	Queen's gambit declined. Draw after 40 moves.
Aug. 17	15	Sicilian defense. Draw after 41 moves.
Aug. 20	16	Ruy Lopez. Draw after 40 moves.
Aug. 22	17	Pirc's defense. Draw after 42 moves.
Aug. 24	18	Sicilian defense. Draw after 47 moves.
Aug. 27	19	Alekhine defense. Draw after 40 moves.
Aug. 29	20	Sicilian defense. Draw after 41 moves.
Aug. 31	21	Spassky resigned after 41st move.

Spirit of '72 on 72d St.

By ANTHONY BURTON

The red-white-and-blue banner carried the proud words, "Bobby Fischer, 1st American Worlds' Chess Champion, 1972."

The idea was to string it across W. 72d St. as soon as word came that the kid from Brooklyn had beaten Boris Spassky and taken the championship.

But yesterday, when the news was flashed from Iceland, chess master Charles Hidalgo was threatened with a shutdown at City Hall as he tried to get permission to display the banner. His opponent, far more deadly than Spassky, was red tape.

Instead of resorting to a Sicilian defense, Hidalgo tried the West Side Attack. He went back to W. 72d St. and ordered that the banner be raised, even though he had no permit.

And so, two hours after Bobby's victory was announced, the $200 banner fluttered outside Hidalgo's Chess House, a sort of intellectual pool hall where Fischer occasionally drops in for a game.

"We ordered the banner some time ago because we knew Bobby would win," Hidalgo said. "Luckily, it arrived last night, just in time."

One reason for City Hall's lack of response to the banner crisis might have been administration's worries about the champion.

Mayor Lindsay wanted to offer him high honor, but there was always the possibility that the quirky Fischer might insist on no noise, no cameras, no people—and then not turn up. Welcoming plans were put on ice until contact could be made with the champ.

Telegram From Lindsay

In the meantime, Lindsay sent a telegram:

"On behalf of all New Yorkers, congratulations on becoming the new world chess champion. All New York City—and indeed all the world—watched your spectacular playing throughout the match with unprecedented interest and excitement.

"You have brought pride and honor to your home borough of Brooklyn and to all New Yorkers. Today is truly a great day for Brooklyn, our city and the nation."

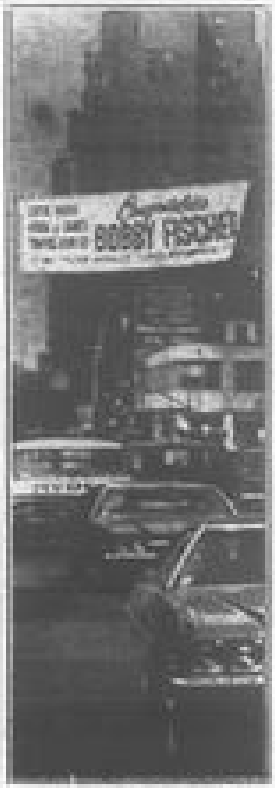
A wary statement from City Hall said that the mayor wanted to extend honors and congratulations "at a mutually convenient time" when Bobby returned to New York.

At the W. 72d St. chess house, there was little excitement either when the news came from Iceland or when the banner was hoisted. The aficionados had long expected a Fischer victory.

The 72d St. buffs say there is nothing new in Bobby's demands for silence while playing. They tell the story of the time he was playing in the chess house when a youngster started drinking milk and eating a cookie nearby.

Bobby couldn't stand it. He got up and walked out.

"The interest isn't going to slow, now the championship is over," Taylor predicted. "Once you get interested in chess, you're hooked."



NEWS photo by Arthur Costa.

It's a banner day for Bobby on W. 72d St., too, where a chess club outfit's congratulations.

Boris Spassky Photo Archive - Chessmetrics.com

Manila, 31st March 1975 (the eve of the intended date of the match)

The President of the Philippines Chess Federation, Florencio Campomanes, offering five million dollars as a prize fund for the match Fischer – Karpov, declared that Fischer had refused to play against Karpov with the conditions worked out by FIDE. Campomanes, who had stayed for a few days with Fischer in Pasadena, added that Fischer was in excellent physical and psychological shape and had agreed to play a match, but only on his conditions.

Amsterdam, 2nd April

Max Euwe received news by telephone that no messages had been received from World Champion Fischer by the appointed date, regarding his intention to play the match against Karpov. Euwe said that that he had decided to postpone by one day the official proclamation of Karpov as World Champion. "If by 11 o'clock on 3rd April 1975, no explanation has been obtained from Fischer, I will send a telegram to Karpov declaring him the new champion. I believe that it is a foregone conclusion, and there is no need to wait another 24 hours," the FIDE President clarified.

Pasadena, 2nd April

Journalists tried to get in contact with Fischer in order to hear from him a final decision on the fate of the match. Already for a long time he had been living in voluntary incarceration in Pasadena in California. His way of life is mysterious, and he has renounced telephones. The door of his house is locked. One of his neighbours said that Fischer had not been seen for six weeks...

Amsterdam, 3rd April

At 11 o'clock Max Euwe advised that no news had come from Fischer, and accordingly Euwe officially declared that Soviet grandmaster Anatoly Karpov had become the new, 12th, World Champion.

In this unusual, inglorious and tragic way the 'Fischer era' came to an end. And although subsequently he undertook practical steps to return to chess life – Fischer held negotiations regarding a match with Karpov in closed, secret meetings in Tokyo and Madrid in 1976, and in Washington in 1977; he flew incognito to Belgrade to arrange a commercial match with S. Gligorić; finally, by then quite unexpectedly – in 1983 he expressed the desire to play against J. Timman – but all these actions had the aim of reminding people of him, rather than of resuming chess activity. After all, World Champion A. Karpov, Fischer's old friend S. Gligorić and the new star of the West, J. Timman were very favourably disposed towards Fischer's offers, but each time the negotiations reached a dead end.

Already, he simply could not play in earnest...

The lot of the great chessplayer became that of a total recluse.

And only his games had not lost their beauty, their charm, their inescapable freshness. Among them the duels of our match, played in the heyday of Robert Fischer.

The following chapter is about them.

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PART II

THE LONG SUFFERING DUEL

I came into the match against Fischer in the decline of my chess career, when I was well over forty years old, and my rich experience meant that I was under no illusions over the significance of the event, or its unrepeatable nature. But only now, twenty years later, can the role of the match in my biography be determined to its full.

...My life in chess began (it is scary to imagine!) more than half a century ago. Over these long years everything had occurred – fascinating, joyful events (which, fortunately, dominated) as well as sadly inevitable failures. This is not surprising. After all, I played in more than sixty important international tournaments and a record number – 23 – USSR Championship finals and an enormous number of individual and team events at all levels, from Olympiads and European Championships to domestic club tournaments. During this half century I had occasion to be a World Championship Candidate, as well as champion of the USSR, Russia and Leningrad – in short, I had had to 'walk through fire'. And yet, if I had been asked which of these events I consider to be the most important, the most dramatic and memorable, I would without thinking have named the quarter-final match for the World Championship against the great American grandmaster Robert Fischer. And not only because I was one of the last to have the honour of fighting against a true legend and the most enigmatic chessplayer of our times, to play against him six fascinating games that were filled with genuinely creative content, but because the outcome of this duel provoked a chain of unforeseen events that for many years determined dramatic changes in my chess life and even in my personal life.

It is sufficient to say that if on the eve of the match I enjoyed the official and public reputation of an 'exemplary' citizen, known not only as a chessplayer but also as a professional pianist and journalist (this, of course, was always stressed by the press – after all, it was as if we did not have

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professional sportsmen!), then after the catastrophic defeat to Fischer I suddenly came under the fire of merciless, destructive criticism from the authorities at all levels, from the Central Committee of the Communist Party to local party cells. And here everything went into action – I was stripped of the title of 'Honoured Master of Sport', removed from the USSR team (which resulted in extensive financial losses), for almost two years travel abroad to participate in international tournaments was closed to me, and I could not even write or give concerts. In short, it was a harsh 'civil execution'.

The reason for this was that someone, from among the most important persons in the Kremlin, got it into their head that a Soviet grandmaster simply could not lose to an American – ideology did not permit this. And therefore my pitiful result had a different basis – namely, an almost deliberate action in the interests of 'American imperialism'.

Naturally, for large-scale sanctions a genuine reason had to be formulated – it would after all have seemed heavy-handed to punish before the whole world a famous grandmaster simply because he had lost, even against an American. And therefore (what criminal came up with this?!) a 'customs violation' served as the formal reason for the public condemnation. In a prejudicial and over-fastidious search at Moscow airport on my return from Canada, in my luggage there was discovered... a novel by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn; I do not recall whether it was *Cancer Ward* or *In the First Circle*. What a find! And although at that time Aleksandr Isaevich was already a 'disgraced' writer, he still retained Soviet citizenship and lived near Moscow. For want of anything better the authorities decided to accuse me of bringing 'prohibited literature' into the country (I will note, by the way, that although Solzhenitsyn's work was then being subjected to spiteful official criticism, the books had not been persecuted legally). How does it feel to recall the disgrace of the authorities, now that the works of the Nobel laureate are published in our country in full, and in enormous print-runs!

And then the customs chief, an elderly man who knew me, said sympathetically: "Mark Evgenievich, why are you so careless? If you had played better against Fischer, I myself would have brought the complete collected works of Solzhenitsyn to you in a taxi..."

Fault was found for other reasons too. At the request of the President of FIDE, Dr Max Euwe, I was carrying a letter that was to be passed to his old friend, grandmaster Salo Flohr, along with a fee of 1100 guilders.13

The letter was of the most innocent type: "Dear Salo, I am sending you money for the articles published in a Dutch magazine..." and then a few more friendly words, from which it followed that neither with the letter nor the money did I have any relationship besides that of postman. But when there is a 'higher' task, why not exploit this for a scandal?!

Judgement was swift. I was summoned to a meeting of the board of the leadership of the Sports Ministry, where everyone was already seated with a translation of the seized letter. And with faces as if it was written there that I had robbed a Canadian bank, and brought millions into the Soviet Union. Sergei Pavlov 14 – Minister of Sport – in a rage accused me of smuggling contraband and of reading a book, which, in his words, "it is disgusting even to touch".

I have already mentioned the 'verdict' and its consequences – I was deprived of everything possible. Pavlov also took a swing at the title of International Grandmaster, but stopped in time – "We do not have the right; it was not us who conferred it."

I recall the bitter joke of my old friend, the great musician Mstislav Rostropovich, who in those difficult days somehow, with characteristic wit, said within his circle of friends, "Have you heard the

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trouble that Solzhenitsyn is in? (the writer was then living at Rostropovich's dacha) – They found him with a copy of Taimanov's *The Nimzo-Indian Defence*!"

Incidentally, recently (27th October 1992) the newspaper *Izvestia* in an article with the title 'The Party's Gambit', there was published for the first time declassified official material from the archive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), concerning this episode.

I will quote extracts from the article.

Of the fact that the Party and its Central Committee penetrated into every sphere of our lives, including sport, much has been written and said. But here is the material from the archive of the Central Committee, provided to the editors by the Centre for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation, and we will once again find out how, and by what methods, this was done.

> The compilation of previously-secret documents begins with a letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU from the chairman of the Committee on Physical Culture and Sport under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, Sergei Pavlov (21st June 1971, No. 1543c). The erstwhile leader of the Komsomol, by then an important sporting director, advises the highest party leadership of the exceptional incident that occurred with grandmaster Mark Taimanov while passing through the customs at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.
> The customs seized from the grandmaster's luggage Solzhenitsyn's book *In the First Circle*, and an envelope with foreign currency (1,100 Dutch guilders, or 279.09 foreign exchange rubles), which he was carrying to grandmaster Salo Flohr from the president of FIDE, Max Euwe. The fee was for articles by Flohr, published abroad.
> What relationship does this unpleasant case, involving the prominent Soviet grandmaster Mark Taimanov, have with the Central Committee of the CPSU, and with the match for the World Championship between Spassky and Fischer?
> The most direct. The search of Taimanov at the border, despite the fact that he had a certificate for a free pass through customs, was carried out after his return from Canada, from the Candidates quarter-final match against Robert Fischer, which ended, as Sergei Pavlov wrote to the Central Committee of the CPSU, in the "unprecedented defeat of the Soviet grandmaster". Fans of this game remember that Fischer won with the indeed crushing score 6–0.
> Then came his victory with the same result in the semi-final of the Candidates matches over the Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen. But in Moscow, Taimanov's loss by a clean score to "this upstart Bobby Fischer" was taken as a personal insult "to the Soviet school of chess" and the entire socialist system. Reprisals were not long in coming.
> "Taking into consideration the serious character of the deeds committed by Taimanov M. E., the Committee on Physical Culture and Sport under the Council of Ministers of the USSR, for improper conduct and breaking of customs regulations – reported to the Central Committee of the CPSU, comrade Pavlov – he is to be deprived of the title 'Honoured Master of Sport' and excluded from the USSR Team."
> They beat Taimanov, and pointed at Spassky, and at other Soviet chessplayers, showing them how to protect the honour of their native country and the socialist system...

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I do not know what would have happened next, had support not come from an altogether unexpected quarter. Thanks are due to my colleague Bent Larsen, who followed me by losing to Fischer, also 0–6. This somewhat cooled the hot heads of my pursuers. Even they could not suspect the Danish grandmaster of secret collusion with the capitalists.

The sharpness of the accusations markedly reduced, but for a long time – years – the pressure of official discontent was felt.

And all the same, going back to the past and summing it up, I will openly say: having suffered the most painful fiasco in my chess career, having experienced all of the injustices of the official attacks and sanctions, I recall the match with Fischer not only without bitterness, but as the brightest significant event in my biography. I have many times wanted to analyse it, to study the creative and psychological content, to understand the reasons for the catastrophe, but in the whirlwind of life's twists and turns, concerts and chess appearances, topical literary commitments, my hands did not get as far as principled generalizations on the distant 'battle in Vancouver', as it was called.

Since those days twenty years have already passed. The wounds healed long ago, the blatant injustice of the authorities was redeemed by a recent decision of the Sports Committee to re-establish my title of 'Honoured Master of Sport of the USSR', and there appeared a need, and an opportunity to pay off the long-standing debt to lovers of chess art and to share my recollections regarding a match that has in general not been found worthy of reflection in chess literature. And after all, it proved to be one of the last in the biography of the great Fischer at the height of his magnificent successes. And in addition, the creative content of the games of the match was far from ordinary...

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I learned the name of my future opponent immediately after the end of the grandiose Interzonal tournament of 1970 in Palma de Mallorca, where Robert Fischer achieved one of the most impressive victories in his brilliant career. He was then the unquestioned favourite; the strongest of all eight Candidates for the title of World Champion, and when the draw determined him as my opponent in the quarter-final match, my friends could not hide their sympathy. To tell the truth, I, however, felt absolutely no disappointment. First and foremost because I am by nature an optimist and believe in my lucky star, while at the time there was an objective basis for this – in my 44th year I had suddenly found a 'second wind', and successes had followed one after the other. Secondly, I reasonably believed that if I was aiming at the highest title, a match with Fischer was not to be avoided. And the earlier it took place, the better. And besides, emotions prevailed over calculations, and I, as a chessplayer was genuinely delighted at the happy and honourable possibility of playing a match against the planet's strongest chessplayer. Needless to say, not many of even my closest friends shared my optimism, while the world's press virtually unanimously, and with sufficient objectivity, predicted victory for the great American. However, not unreservedly. I will refer to the interesting and deep analysis of the opponent's chances, given by the 'chess magician', Mikhail Tal:

"Although before the Fischer – Taimanov match the majority of specialists gave preference to the American grandmaster, experts promising definite chances for Taimanov were to be found. In particular, M. Botvinnik expressed the opinion that there could not be any talk of Fischer's guaranteed victory. I must confess that I too shared this point of view. Why?

"Analysing a sample of Fischer's games from 1970, I came to the conclusion that in quiet positions, especially those with a slight initiative on his side, the American grandmaster was very, very dangerous. But in sharp, tense situations, when on the board everything is 'spinning', and the outcome of the struggle can be decided at every move, Fischer does not always feel sufficiently confident. Whereas Taimanov is particularly happy to play positions with chances for both sides. We need only recall his celebrated game against Lutikov from the Zonal championship of the country in 1969. Though it was not without mistakes, Taimanov conducted it in such inspired fashion, with such enormous will to win, that ultimately all barriers collapsed in the face of his onslaught.15

"This is why I agreed that in a sharp struggle, Taimanov had chances of opposing Fischer. Besides,

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Taimanov's sporting appearances were rich in ups and downs, but he always created and fought to the end. Meanwhile Fischer (strangely enough) had been spoiled by continual triumphs. Would he possess sufficient immunity to failure?"

And, probably, Tal was right when he later said, "Who knows how the battle between Fischer and Taimanov would have developed, had the Leningrad grandmaster exploited the imperfect play of his opponent in the 1st, and especially the 3rd, games of the match..."

In short, weighing up my chances and based on assessments 'from outside', I had some justification for maintaining optimism...

Before the match half a year remained, and I got down to preparation without delay. So as to put together a broad and comprehensive programme, I asked M. M. Botvinnik for advice.

Mikhail Moiseevich was my trainer already in my childhood years and for his whole life he remained an unquestioned authority. Naturally, it was precisely to him that I was ready to entrust the fate of all of my preparation. With gratitude I note that he treated my problems with absolute kindness and attention and not only shared his thoughts but also gave many deep, original, purely individual practical recommendations.

First and foremost, he considered it obligatory to determine the makeup of my helpers. The candidacy of Evgeny Vasiukov, with whom I then had a close creative friendship, was obvious16, but the second vacancy gave rise to a dispute.

I confess, I very much wanted to invite as an aide Mikhail Tal, towards whom I had feelings of respect and personal sympathy. But Botvinnik unexpectedly and very decisively objected. "You are both somewhat Bohemian in life," he said, "and the atmosphere during the match can be fairly ascetic during such a trial. It is better to take Yuri Balashov – although he is young and does not have sufficient experience, he is an excellent analyst, very serious by nature, and, besides everything else, he is an authoritative 'Fischer scholar' – after all, his graduate work in the Institute of Physical Culture was dedicated to none other than your opponent." I could not but listen to the advice of my teacher, although, frankly speaking, on the eve of the match and especially during it, I many times reproached myself for this. I think that the company of Mikhail Tal, with his zest for life and his match experience, together with his outstanding chess talent, would have been an important support for me in the difficult days of single combat.

As concerns the individual examination of the personality of Fischer and the characteristics of his play, here the insight of Botvinnik and his collegial generosity proved simply invaluable: Mikhail Moiseevich had a few years before expected to play a match against the great American 17, and completely in keeping with his principles of preparation, had thoroughly studied his creative oeuvre, and 'programmed' and compiled a comprehensive dossier, which he also shared with me.

Here there were a lot of important generalizations concerning Fischer's manner of play, his opening repertoire and sporting attributes; many apt observations regarding his favourite stratagems, his endgame mastery and so on. In short, a vivid and accurate analytical portrait.

Fortunately, I have retained a written note of Botvinnik's observations and conclusions, and as a

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unique and very interesting document I present it in full:

In the opening:

– Going into every event Fischer prepares some sort of new variation (often only one). He has variations (for example in the Sicilian Defence) which he has thoroughly worked out and he willingly and confidently goes in for them.

– In the Sicilian with White he often places his pieces according to the set-up ♘c3, ♘b3, ♗d3, ♗e3 and ♕f3.

– In various openings he likes the arrangement ...♗g7, ...d7-d6 and ...♘e5.

– When he runs into a surprise in the opening (especially in theoretical positions) he almost always reacts unsuccessfully!

– Fischer does not like pawn chains. He needs 'air' for his pieces.

In the middlegame:

– Against opponents that he knows to be weaker, he likes to sharply advance his kingside pawns.

– He likes clear-cut positions. He is ready for any simplification, when he has positional advantages.

– He reacts uncertainly to abrupt changes to the situation on the board (going from attack to defence).

– It is in the main sharp positions that he loses. 'Technical' defeats almost never occur.

– He 'protects' his pawn chains.

– He likes to 'spoil' the opponent's pawns.

– He likes to sacrifice the exchange for a central pawn.

– He likes to transfer a rook along the 3rd rank (♖f1-e1-e3).

– He likes 'long' queen moves.

– Against knights on b3 and b6 he likes to advance the a-pawn.

– He readily parts with bishops (often both ...♗f8-b4xc3 and ...♗c8-g4xf3).

In the endgame:

– He prefers a knight to a bishop.

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– He likes long ‘raids’ by the king.

– He likes to play with opposite-coloured bishops with rooks on the board.

General observations:

– Previously he willingly sacrificed pawns for piece activity. With the passing of the years he has become ‘greedier’ with regard to material.

– He likes to ‘grab’ pawns. In so doing he sometimes ‘sells himself short’.

– He has a good sense of both the negative and positive sides of piece coordination.

– He does not like strong pieces for the opponent and seeks to exchange them immediately.

– For his part, he does not miss tactics and sees a lot.

– Often, he replies to an attack on one of his pieces with a counterattack on one of the opponent’s (intermediate attacks!).

Some additional observations:

– Against Fischer, material should not be sacrificed ‘on general considerations’. If there is a concrete refutation, he will find it.

– He must not be allowed to have activity without counterplay for the opponent!

A remarkable analysis!

This was simply a great help in preparation and I am only sorry that I did not do it justice...

I will also share my recollections of Mikhail Moiseevich’s advice on practical aspects of pre-match training.

First and foremost, he recommended playing a few (8-10) training games in the favoured opening repertoire against a ‘strengthened’ opponent. By this terminology Botvinnik meant that a set of privileges were determined for the opponent. Above all he had to be a ‘paired and strengthened’ opponent – in other words my seconds Yuri Balashov and Evgeny Vasiukov had the right to be in an adjoining room, to consult over each move, thereby taking joint decisions, to move the pieces on the board and even to make use of reference literature. In addition the thinking time for the ‘paired and strengthened’ opponent was a full hour more than for me – for 40 moves, 3½ hours!

I, however, would play according to all of the normal rules, only I would not see my opponent. Needless to say, a serious test! I do not recall exactly the result of our training match, but I think that I played it fairly solidly – something like +1, –2, with the remainder drawn.

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Among the other specific recommendations of Botvinnik I recall some that were very curious. In particular one, associated with an inescapable and habitual weakness of mine since my childhood years – reflex reactions. Here, in order to overcome this harmful mannerism Mikhail Moiseevich advised me during the training games to place by the chess clock... a sand-glass. The idea was that I would not make any move in reply during the minute that the reservoir was emptying, while to 'insure' myself further, during play I would sit on the palms of my hands, to mechanically exclude impulsive moves and to prevent my hands from getting ahead of my thoughts! In general, looking back, I think that the multi-planned preparation, which included theoretical, practical and physical aspects, was sufficiently fruitful, and I headed to the match fully-armed, filled with my inherent optimism.

I will take this opportunity to once again thank Mikhail Moiseevich for his kind participation in the preparation for this memorable match, and at the same time repent before him for the fact that I failed to put his excellent advice to worthy use. But this no longer depended solely on me...

Fischer scores 6-0 sweep in world chess match

By BILL RAYNER

The formality of a handshake today closed another chapter in the chess career of Bobby Fischer.

For U.S. grandmaster Fischer, the handshake from Mark Taimanov signified the resignation of the Soviet grandmaster in the sixth game of their world chess championship quarter-final match.

It also signified a stunning 6-0 sweep by Fischer of the 10-game series and qualified him to meet Danish grandmaster Bent Larsen in the semi-finals of the challengers' round.

Fischer, two pawns ahead and in the process of breaking a pawn through to the queening rank, had Taimanov in a hopeless position on the 43rd move Tuesday night.

But Taimanov, following the Russian game plan of delaying every decision as long as possible, asked for adjournment — the sixth straight in the match.

Taimanov, playing the Sicilian defence with the black pieces, made some slight errors in the opening which allowed Fischer to slice open his kingside pawn formation.

However, he maintained a strong centre and had room for a direct assault on white's king. The attack came, but was half-hearted and easily rebuffed by Fischer.

Taimanov then tried a foray on the queenside but lacked the resources to carry it out successfully — a theme that ran through all six games.

Taimanov once again lost his way in the pawn infighting. Fischer always had a move that was just a little bit better and entered the endgame with marked superiority.

A draw Tuesday was all Fischer needed to win the match, but he was not about to offer it to Taimanov.

At adjournment, all the ingredients for a Fischer victory were present: pawn superiority, mobility and tempo.

He had a rook and knight against Taimanov's rook and bishop, and was in the process of demonstrating that a bishop does not always have superiority over a knight—especially when the knight belongs to Fischer.

If Fischer gets by Larsen in the semi-final match, the Russians (either Tigran Petrosian or Viktor Korchnoi) will get another chance to deny him his ultimate aim: a title match with world champion Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union.

White Fischer	Black Taimanov	White Fischer	Black Taimanov
1. P-K4	P-QB4	23. Q-Q3	R-B1
2. N-KB3	N-QB3	24. QxQP	QxQ
3. P-Q4	PxP	25. RxQ	P-Q4
4. NxP	P-K3	26. N-B3	R-B4
5. N-N5	P-Q3	27. R-Q2	R-B5
6. B-KB4	P-K4	28. P-KN3	R-B5
7. B-K3	N-KB3	29. N-K2	R-QR5
8. B-KN5	B-K3	30. P-QR3	K-Q2
9. QN-B3	P-QR3	31. K-N2	P-QN4
10. BxN	PxB	32. P-QR3	P-QR4
11. N-R3	N-Q5	33. N-Q4	P-QN5
12. N-B4	P-B4	34. N-N3	R-N3
13. P-KP	NxP (5)	35. RPxP	PxP
14. B-Q3	R-R1	36. P-QB4	K-B3
15. BxN	BxN	37. P-QB5	B-B2
16. RxB	PxB	38. N-Q4ch	K-Q2
17. Q-K2	R-Q5	39. P-B4	P-K4
18. O-O	Q-KN4	40. P-B6ch	K-B1
19. QR-Q1	Q-B4	41. N-N3	R-R7
20. RxR	PxR	42. P-B5	R-Q1
21. N-K4	R-K2	43. RxP	Adjourn'd
22. R-Q1	Q-K4		

ROYAL CITY HOSTS CHESS FESTIVAL

The New Westminster chess festival will be held this weekend at New Westminster Community Centre, Sixth Avenue and McBride.

This B.C. Festival of Sports event is open to all classes and will be a five-round Swiss tournament.

Classes are open, junior 18 years and under, and junior 14 years and under. Entry fee is $3 for the open event and $1 for the junior events. No B.C. Chess Federation membership is required.

The junior events will be held on Saturday only.

Prizes will be awarded for winners and runners-up in all classes, plus special prizes for novice players finishing high in their category.

Registration is Saturday at 12 noon.

In Vancouver

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At the beginning of May 1971 our small but tightly-knit team – Evgeny Vasiukov, Yuri Balashov, the head of the delegation Alexander Kotov, and I – took off for far-away Canada, where in Vancouver the long-awaited duel with Bobby Fischer was due to take place.

My mighty adversary was already there – his team proved to be very small – grandmaster Larry Evans, who had been intended to play the role of second, did not agree to two of Fischer's categorical demands – not to bring his wife with him and to refrain from journalistic activity during the match – and 'for all occasions', there came to Vancouver with Fischer his faithful friend and wise mentor, Colonel Ed Edmondson, who directed his charge's every step and excluded himself only from the creative process. As the journalist Dmitri Bjelica said, Edmondson was in charge of everything other than moving the pieces on the chessboard, for which Bobby, however, had no need.

Bobby and I met as old acquaintances with good friendly greetings, but immediately we were caught up in the organizational turmoil. Due to their lack of experience our hospitable hosts, while sincerely striving to create the best conditions for play, turned out to be not quite sure how to do this. That is, everything concerning the hotel and the reception was excellent, but such 'trifles' as the preparation of the playing hall in no way corresponded to either its purpose or accepted standards. Having heard that R. Fischer did not like to play with spectators, they had in mind, for a match in the world championship... a small room in the library section of the student campus, where one could hardly breathe... Although I am normally ready to compromise, here I had to protest resolutely. Fortunately, there was no conflict – both sides displayed mutual understanding and ultimately Fischer agreed even to the presence of an audience, admittedly with a limit on their number. In short, there on the campus there was found a small but comfortable hall with 200 seats and, albeit with a delay of four days, the match began.

By today's standards the conditions were more than modest. Canada does not have a great chess tradition, fans of the art were very few (at any rate, this was the case 20 years ago), and in addition the press was not usually too interested in chess. As concerns the prize fund, by modern criteria and in general it is difficult to believe – it consisted of... three thousand dollars. Two to the winner and one to the loser. Today, champions would not give a modest simultaneous display for such a sum...

Thanks are due to Robert Fischer and the way that he, like an influential and persistent trade union boss, stood up for justice in the interests of his colleagues – the millions in prizes and the many thousands in honorariums that govern modern chess life are above all due to him!

But one way or another, thanks to the energy of the caring organizers: the Vice-President of FIDE, Mr. John Prentice, the President of FIDE Max Euwe, who came to his help, and the Chief Arbiter, the Yugoslav Božidar Kažić – all difficulties were overcome and the quarter-final match for the world championship began in a benevolent and friendly atmosphere.

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GAME 1

Already the first effort showed that both players were in uncompromising mood and did not want to spend valuable time (10 games were allotted to the match) on a traditional starting warm-up. Fischer was always characterized by such a fighting spirit, and I too, I confess, did not experience any particular timidity. And not only by reason of my innate optimism, but also on the basis of the two games that I had previously played against Fischer, in which I had collected only a half-point, but in which during the course of the struggle, as the reader already knows, I had felt completely confident.

The tone of the opening encounter was defined by the opening choice. The double-edged King's Indian Defence was the theoretical 'gun' that was destined to be 'fired' already in the first act. The King's Indian had served Fischer truly and faithfully for many years, and he was very consistent in his attachment to certain openings. On my part, I too was thirsty for a principled discussion along these lines, since I had previously played one of the most topical systems (indeed, it bears my name) very readily, and for the match I had prepared a series of new continuations. Thus, the first game.

Mark Taimanov – Robert James Fischer

Candidates quarter-final (1), Vancouver 1971

King's Indian Defence

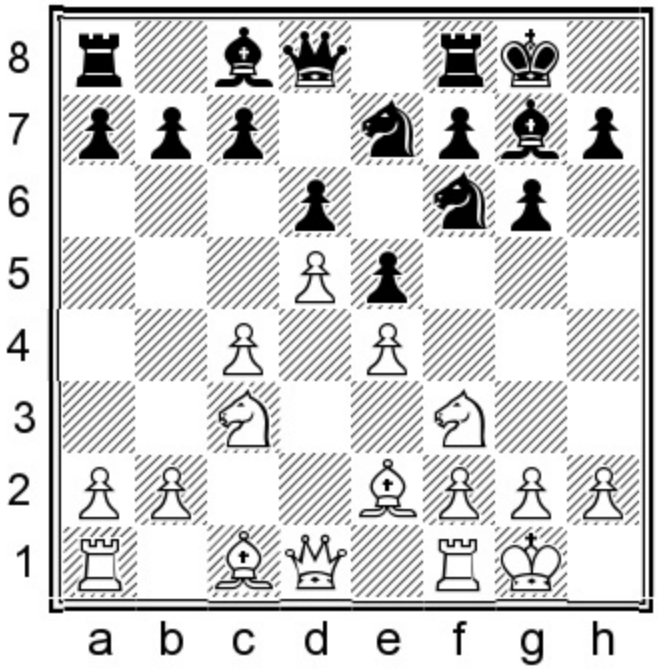
1.d4 ♘f6

This move was made 10 minutes after the start of the game. And not because Fischer had thought over it for so long – he was simply... late. Incidentally, this was generally typical of Bobby. Perhaps, this was a way of asserting himself? Or of unnerving the opponent?

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2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7

Probably neither opponent doubted that this position, which opens up broad space for creative fantasy, would arise in our match. Each had his view on it, had deep feelings for it and had no objective basis for avoiding this deeply-studied system. But who would be the first to present a prepared surprise?



9.♗d2

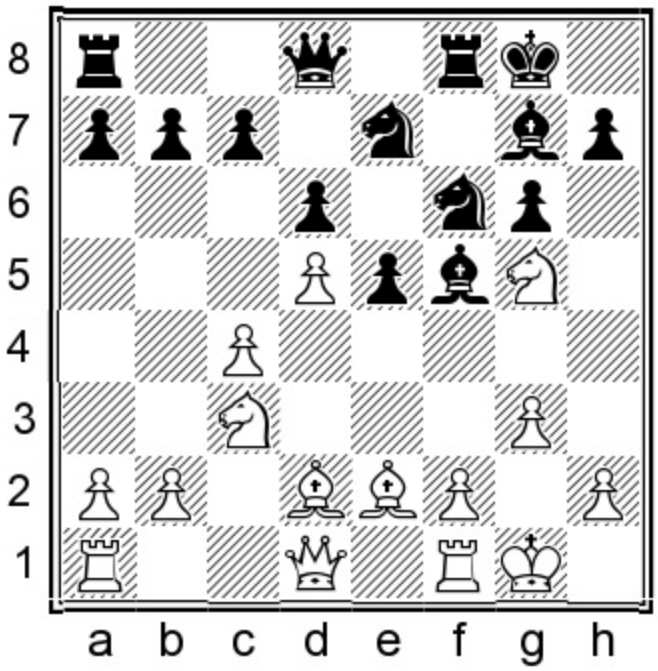
Fischer could also have expected here 9.b4, 9.♘e1 and 9.♘d2, which had all been encountered many times in my games. The quiet developing move with the bishop has the aim of rapidly mobilizing the queenside forces.

9...♘e8

Judging by how quickly and clearly Fischer reacted to my choice of variation, he was prepared for the discussion.

Less convincing is 9...♘h5 in view of: 10.g3 f5 11.exf5 ♗xf5 12.♘g5 ♘f6

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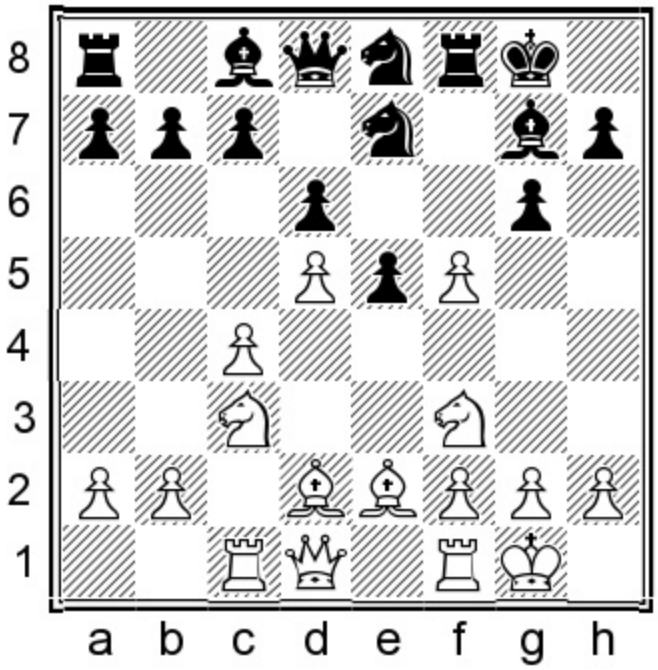


13.g4 ♗d7 14.♘ge4 ♘xe4 15.♘xe4 With a positional advantage for White.18

10.♖c1

10.b4 is often tried here, but I rejected it, since it was unnecessary for the set-up that I had prepared for the match.

10...f5 11.exf5

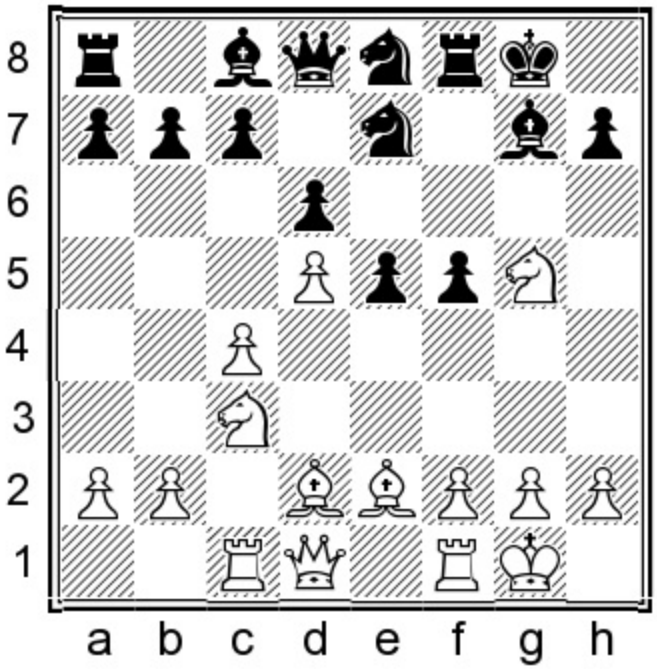


The opening of the game in the centre comes into White's intended program, but the exchange is better carried out a move later, playing first 11.♕b3, which was tested in the 3rd game and led to a successful opening outcome.

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11...gxf5 12.♘g5

This thrust determines White's strategic idea. With the transfer of the knight to e6 he strives, even at the cost of a pawn sacrifice, to seize space in the centre and to develop piece pressure along the opened files and diagonals.



12...h6 13.♘e6 ♗xe6 14.dxe6 ♕c8 15.♕b3 c6!?

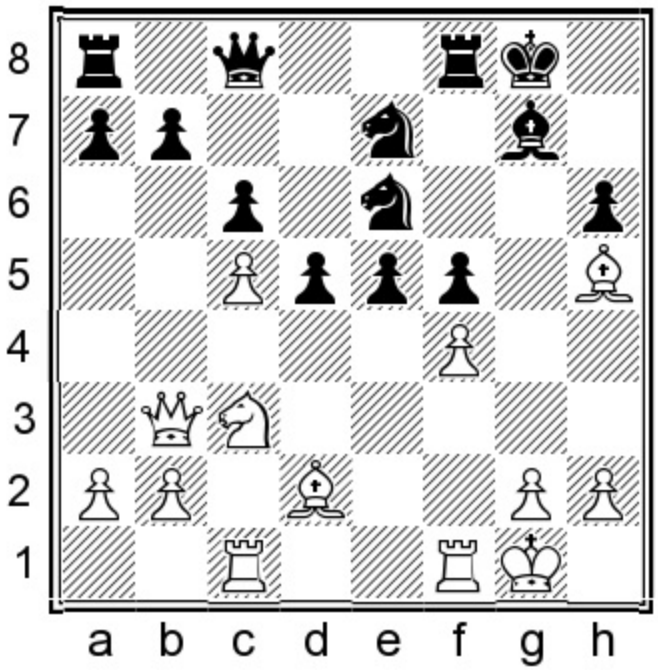
First and foremost, the d5-square should be defended.

Definite difficulties arise for Black in the case of 15...b6 16.♘d5 ♕xe6 17.♘xe7† ♕xe7 18.c5† ♔h8 19.cxd6 ♘xd6 20.♖c6, as was show by a later game of mine against M. Tseitlin (1972).

16.♗h5 ♕xe6

Fischer was a stickler for logical, clear solutions. He rejected the alternative 16...♘c7 without any particular hesitation. And indeed, in this case after: 17.f4!? (also possible is 17.♗f7†) 17...♘xe6 (or 17...e4 18.♗f7† ♔h7 19.♘xe4! fxe4 20.f5 ♖xf7 21.exf7 ♘xf5 22.♕h3) 18.c5 d5

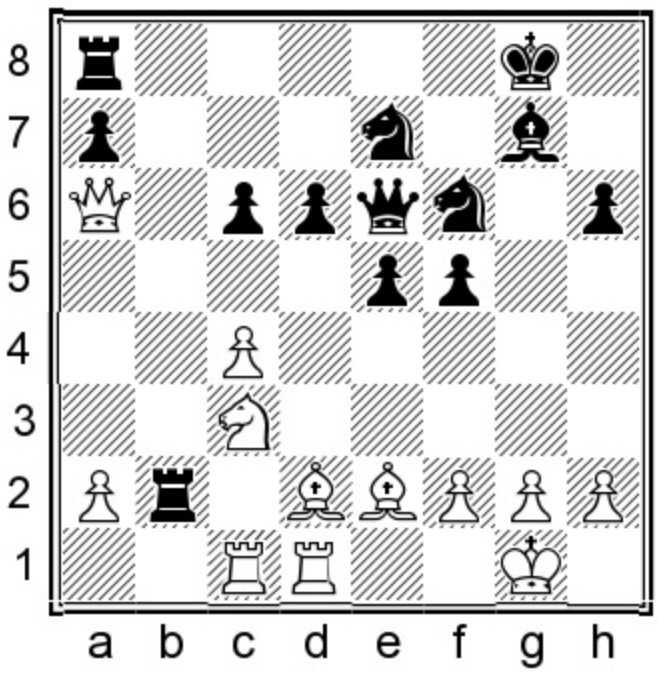
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19.fxe5 ♘xc5 (if 19...♕c7, then 20.♘e2!?) 20.♕b4 b6 21.♘a4 ♕e6 (21...♘xa4?! 22.♕xe7) 22.♘xc5 bxc5 23.♕xc5 An obvious initiative is on White's side.

17.♕xb7 ♘f6 18.♗e2 ♖fb8 19.♕a6 ♖xb2 20.♖fd1

The time has come to summarize the results of the exciting opening battle. Perhaps, each of the sides could be satisfied with it – Black has an extra pawn, White has active piece play. Such a conflict usually preordains a sharp and uncompromising nature of the subsequent events.



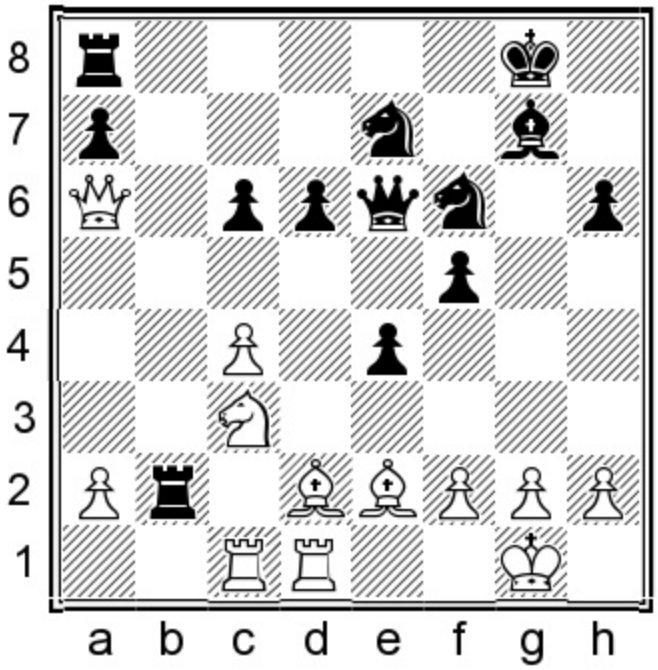
20...e4

A committal decision. Its negative points are obvious, since the weakness of the dark squares in the centre becomes prominent. But, as is well known, Fischer did not tolerate passive positions and

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went in for concessions (the cost of which he understood perfectly) for the sake of counterplay, associated here with the seizing of space in the centre and the eventual enlivening of his king's bishop.

At any rate, defence with 20...♘d7 21.♕a3 ♖b7 22.♗e3 ♘c8 was not to his taste on account of the possible blow 23.c5! and on 23...d5 (if 23...dxc5, then 24.♘a4) then 24.♘xd5.



21.♕a3!?

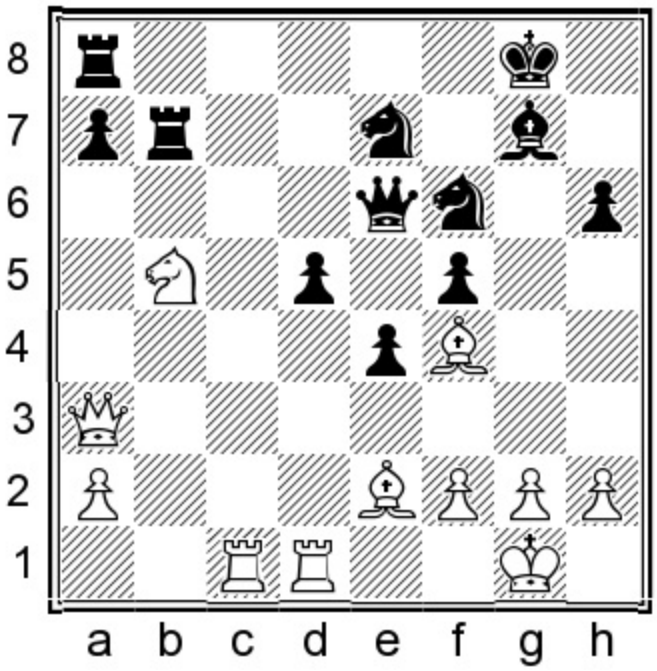
Fischer's idea would be revealed in the variation: 21.♗f4 ♘e8 22.♗h5 (otherwise 22...♗xc3) 22...♗e5! 23.♗xe8?! ♗xf4!

21...♖b7 22.♗f4 d5 23.cxd5 cxd5

Note that the capture 23...♘exd5, which was recommended at the time by some commentators, had its shortcomings in view of 24.♗c4 followed by 25.♘e2, which noticeably dynamizes White's game.

24.♘b5!

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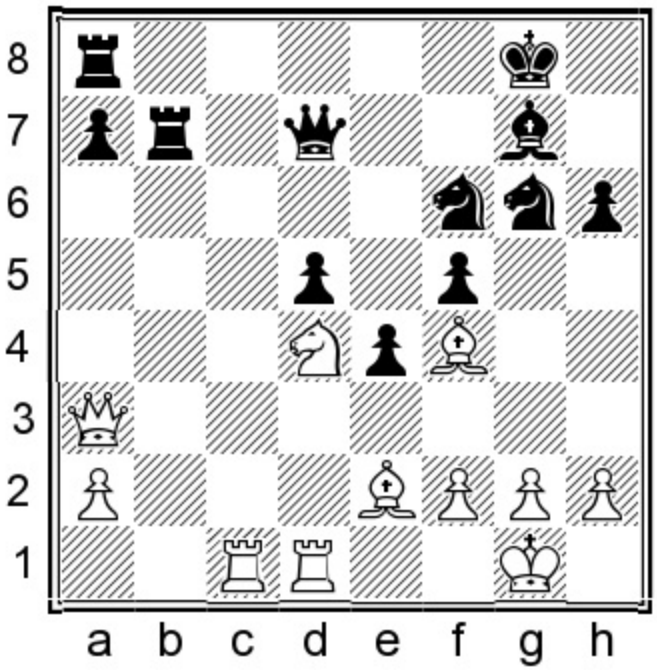


24...♘g6!?

An eye for an eye! Fischer never missed a possibility for counterplay! Thus, here for the sake of the initiative he is ready to part with an exchange after 25.♘c7 ♕f7 26.♘xa8 ♘xf4, while on the 'natural' manoeuvre 25.♕g3 he had prepared a tactical 'trick' – 25...♘h5! 26.♗xh5 ♘xf4 27.♕xf4 ♖xb5 28.♖c7 ♕e5!, permitting him to 'come out of the water dry'.

But, all the same, problems still remain for Black.

25.♘d4! ♕d7



26.♕e3?!

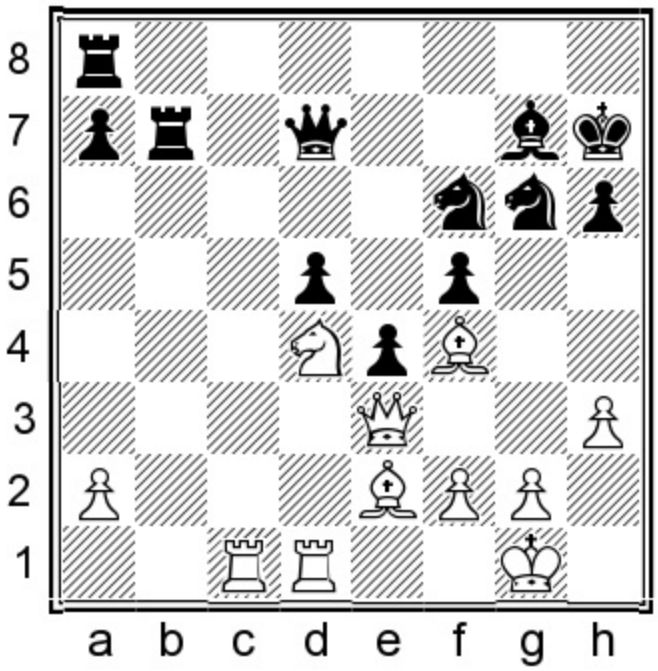
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The first serious lapse. White carries out the correct idea in a less than clear-cut manner.

Meanwhile, had White continued 26.♕g3! ♔h7 (after 26...♘xf4 27.♕xf4 the f5-pawn is lost) 27.♖c6 with the threats of 27.♖d6, 27.♖dc1 or even 27.♗xh6!, the opponent could have been confronted with serious, scarcely surmountable difficulties. Who knows how, in this case, events in the match would have unfolded...19

26...♔h7 27.h3

Alas, here the intended move 27.♖c6 would have already been an empty blow in view of 27...♘g4. A tempo has to be lost, and who does not know that this means to lose time in the attack!



27...♖f8!

Both sides' forces have now been drawn up, and all of the dangers for Black are behind him.

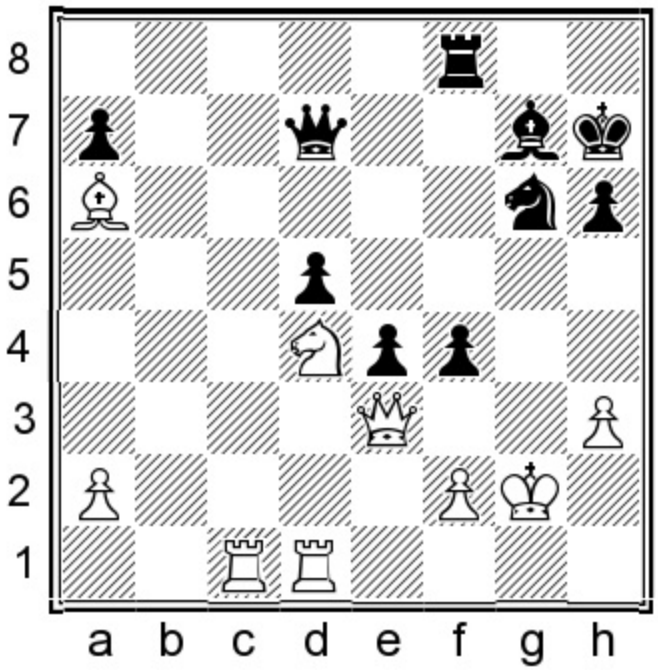
28.♗a6

This aggressive, although also risky move, leads to a new round of boundless complications, where the chances are impossible to assess in advance. But even knowing the result, I cannot with hindsight criticize myself for this bold decision, since the 'inertia of the initiative' was at that moment very strong. 20

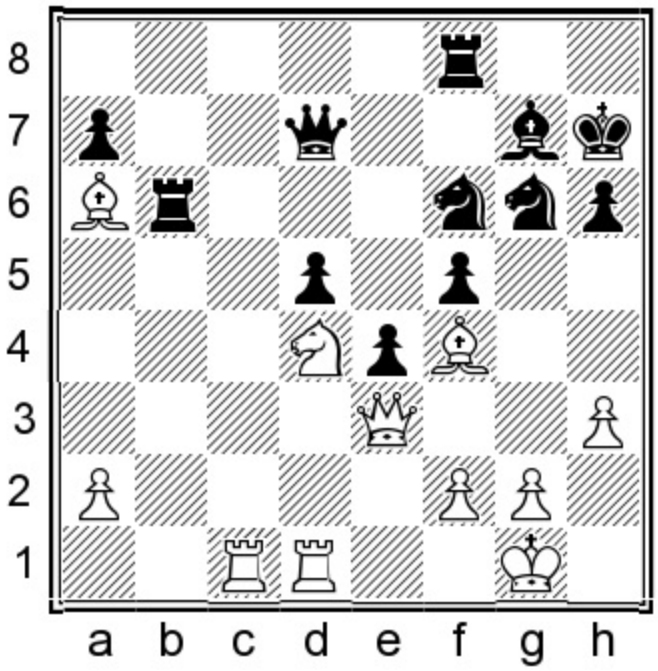
Objectively speaking, however, a positional method should have been preferred – 28.♖c5, which would most probably have led to a peaceful result in the variation recommended by G. Sosonko: 28...♘xf4 29.♕xf4 ♘e8 30.♗b5 ♕d6 31.♕xd6 ♘xd6 32.♗c6

28...♖b6

Interesting, but insufficient, is: 28...♘h5 in view of: 29.♗xb7 ♘hxf4 30.♗a6 ♘xg2!? 31.♔xg2 f4



32.♕a3! f3† 33.♔f1 ♕xh3† 34.♔e1 ♘f4 35.♗f1! ♕h2 (35...♕h1 36.♖c7!) 36.♕e3 ♗e5!? 37.♘xf3! exf3 38.♕xf3 And White wins. Spectacular!

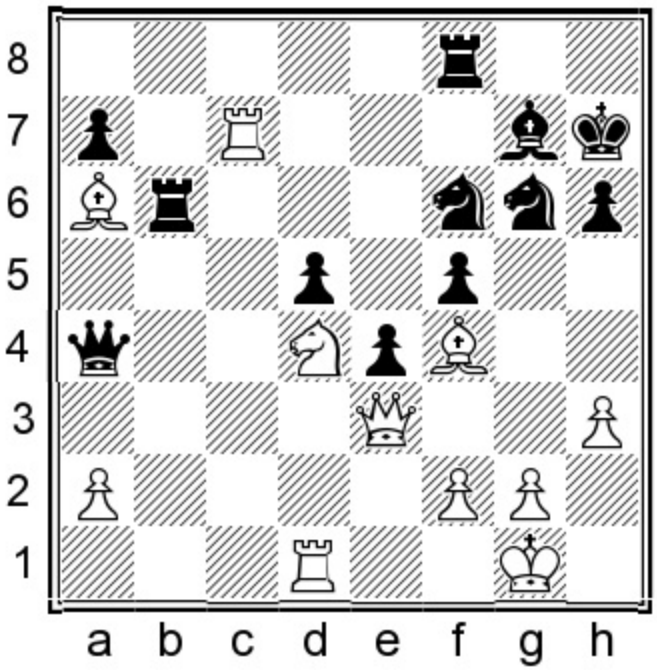


29.♖c7

Alas, 29.♗b5 ♖xb5 30.♖c7 ♕e8 31.♗xh6 (or 31.♘xf5 ♘h5!) fails in view of 31...f4! 32.♕e2 (or 32.♖xg7† ♔xh6 33.♘f5† ♔g5!) 32...♔xh6 33.♘f5† ♔h7! 34.♖xg7† (34.♘xg7 ♕d8!) 34...♔h8 35.♘d6 ♕e5! 36.♖xg6 ♖b2 and Black wins. Some real puzzles for time trouble!

29...♕a4!

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30.♖xg7†!?

Only forwards! There is no time for quiet continuations.

On 30.♗e2, very unpleasant is 30...♘e8.

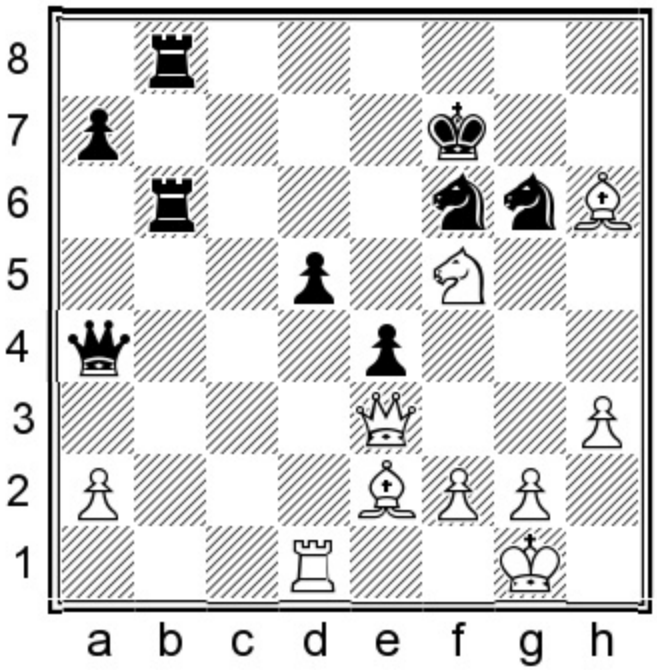
30...♔xg7 31.♗xh6† ♔f7!

Fischer's play in this stage of the game is irreproachable – his king would have been uncomfortable on h7.

32.♗e2 ♖fb8! 33.♘xf5

The heat of the struggle refuses to subside. White has a pawn for the exchange, an active piece position and... time trouble. The last-named factor proved decisive.

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33...♖b1!

Counterattack!

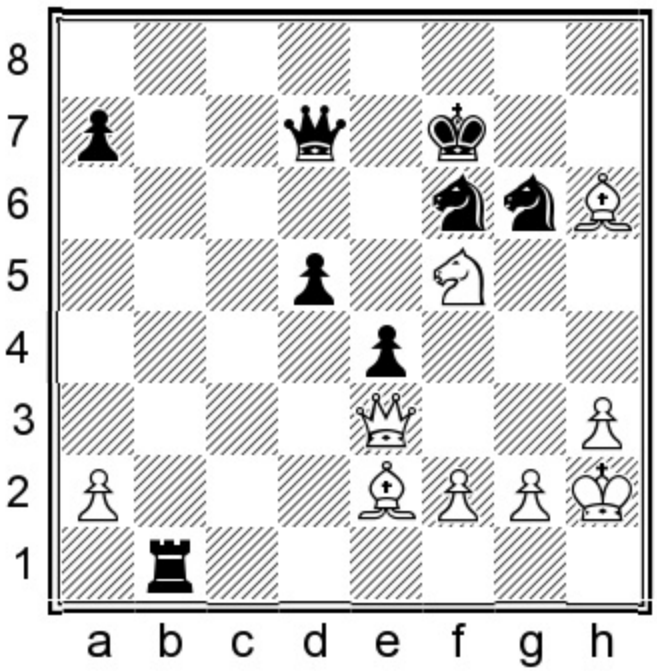
34.♖xb1

Possibly, it did not fundamentally affect the assessment of the position, but all the same the immediate 34.♔h2 was better, since 34...♖xd1 35.♗xd1 ♕xd1 would not do in view of 36.♕xa7†.

Naturally, on 34.♔h2 Fischer would have replied with the 'programmed' 34...♕d7. 21

34...♖xb1† 35.♔h2 ♕d7!

First and foremost, back to the epicentre of events!



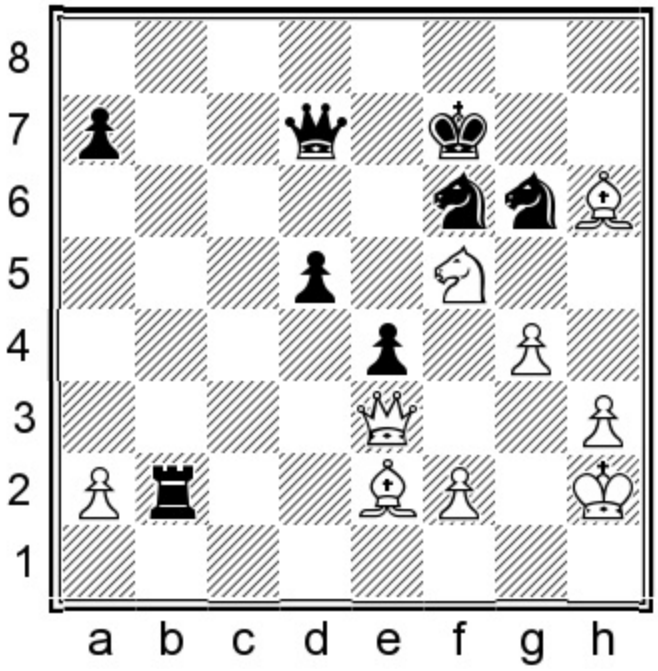
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36.♘d4?

This is capitulation. Meanwhile, even after all of the lapses in the latter phase of the battle, matters were still far from deplorable for White.

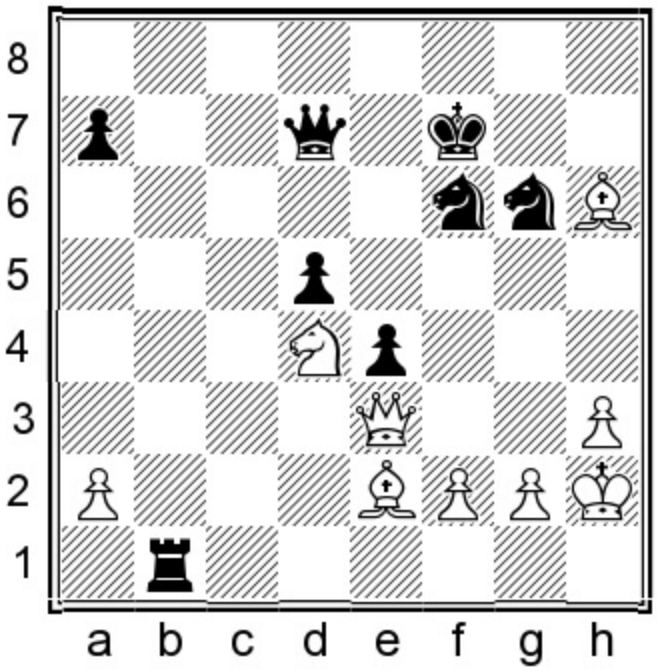
Admittedly, the obvious attacking thrust 36.♕g5 encounters a strong retort by means of 36...♕c7† 37.g3 ♖b2, and now on 38.♗g7 not 38...♕e5 (which, astonishingly, was recommended by many authorities) on account of 39.♗xf6 ♕xf6 40.♘h6† with a draw, but the crushing 38...♕b6!.

However, at White's disposal was a more attractive resource – 36.g4!?, after which the play would have retained its dynamic richness. For instance: 36...♖b2 (or 36...♕c7† 37.♔g2 ♕b6 38.♕a3! with the idea of 39.♗e3)



37.a3!? ♕c7† 38.♔g2 ♕b6 39.♘d4!? And since the white pieces, in particular the invulnerable knight, are occupying active positions, each side retains their trumps.

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36...♕d6† 37.g3 ♕b4!

A stunning manoeuvre, abruptly changing the character of the battle. The threat of 38...♕e1 suddenly puts White in a hopeless situation.

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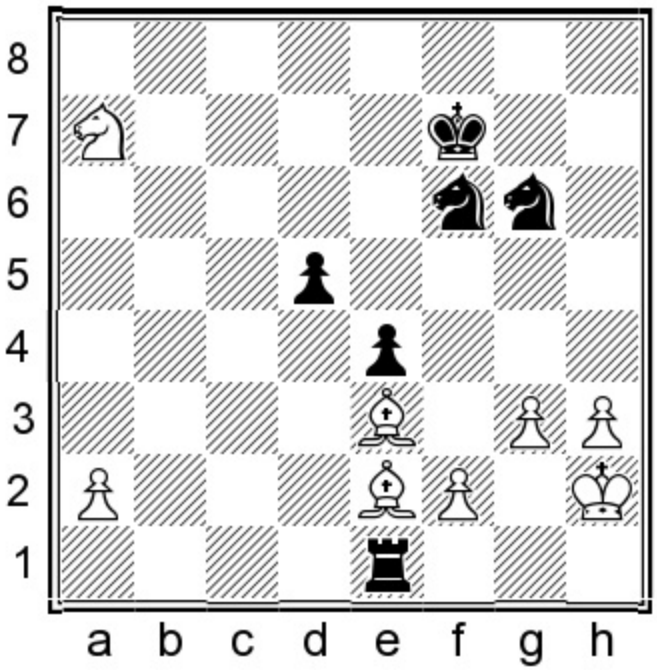


38.♘c6 ♕b6! 39.♘xa7

There is already no salvation, but objectively stronger would have been 39.♘d4 or 39.♕xb6.

39...♕xe3 40.♗xe3 ♖e1!

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In this position the game was adjourned. I sealed the move 41.♗g4 (what else...) and resigned without resuming play. After 41...♘xg4† 42.hxg4 ♘e5, resistance is pointless.

A hurtful defeat!

0–1

Clearly, the finale of the game gave serious cause for disappointment, but I remember that I did not feel dejected. In a grandiose battle that unfolded on the board and presented the opponent with difficult problems, I had, as it seemed to me, throughout almost the whole of the duel, yielded nothing to my mighty opponent. Moreover, after a bold experiment in the opening I held the initiative for a long time and was close to success. And although M. Botvinnik subsequently considered that "Taimanov chose an incorrect method of play – Fischer needs to be limited", I did not regret the chosen strategy.

The first 'test of strength', despite the failure, perhaps only added to my optimism.

Alas, not for long...

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GAME 2

Robert James Fischer – Mark Taimanov

Candidates quarter-final (2), Vancouver 1971

Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5

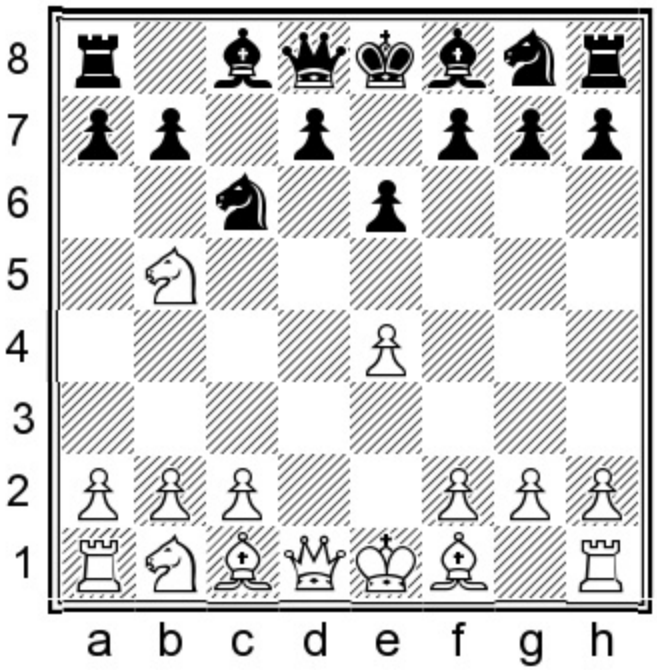
Of course, neither Fischer nor I had any doubt that, together with the King's Indian Defence (in the odd-numbered games), in the even-numbered ones the main defence would be the Sicilian. The recollection of the dramatic game that we played in Palma de Mallorca, as well as the analysis of our tournament practice over many years, guaranteed the continuation of a theoretical discussion precisely within the framework of this opening.

Admittedly, I can divulge a secret – in the case of an unforeseen crash on the main highways of our preparation (which happens from time to time in the main variations of the Sicilian!), in reserve there was in store the French Defence, taking account of the fact that at that time Fischer did not have a very good relationship with it. But, unfortunately, events in the match developed such that although the Sicilian did not justify itself too well, things still did not get as far as the French...

2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘b5

Fischer's favourite strategy. For him it is very important to gain any kind of positional privilege – be it an advantage in development or space, or possession of an outpost – and in 'clinging' to this factor, to turn it to the service of the initiative.

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5...d6 6.♗f4

In Mallorca, as the reader already knows, Fischer chose against me the system with 6.c4, but after 6...♘f6 7.♘1c3 a6 8.♘a3 ♗e7 9.♗e2 0-0 10.0-0 b6 11.♗e3 ♗d7 12.♖c1 ♕b8!? 13.f3 ♖a7 14.♘c2 ♖d8 15.♕e1 ♗e8, despite the spatial advantage, he did not extract any significant advantage from the opening.

As the course of this game showed, for our match Fischer had prepared a much more insidious plan...

6...e5

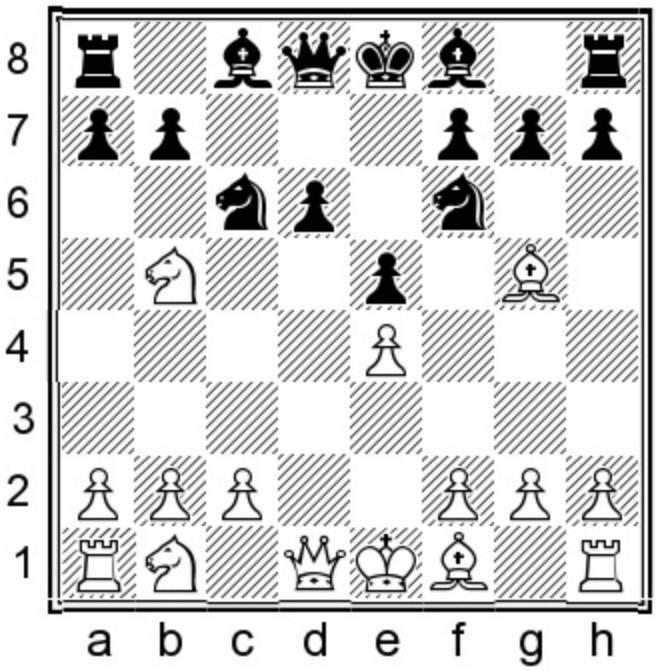
Since the other method of covering the d6-pawn – 6...♘e5 – is rightly condemned by theory in view of 7.♘1a3! ♘f6 8.♗xe5 (also good is 8.♕d4) 8...dxe5 9.♕xd8† ♔xd8 10.♖d1† ♔e7 11.♘d6, Black has to cede control over the important d5-square, which Fischer was striving for. However, to achieve this White has to pay with the loss of tempos.

7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.♗g5

I remember that this move somewhat surprised me, and even alerted me. After all, it was difficult to believe that Fischer, who knew everything, did not know the textbook variation 8...♕a5† 9.♗d2 (the alternative 9.♕d2 was also not considered dangerous for Black) 9...♕d8 10.♗g5 ♕a5† 11.♗d2 ♕d8 where White, in order to avoid a threefold repetition of the position, has to go in for a concession with 12.♘5c3.

This meant that home preparation by Fischer lay ahead. Where?

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8...♕a5†

At that point I still believed in this check. Towards the end of the match I was already seeking other paths...

9.♕d2

In preparation for the match my seconds and I had studied this possibility and, as it seemed, found a strong response. It remained only to wait and see who had 'outwitted' whom.

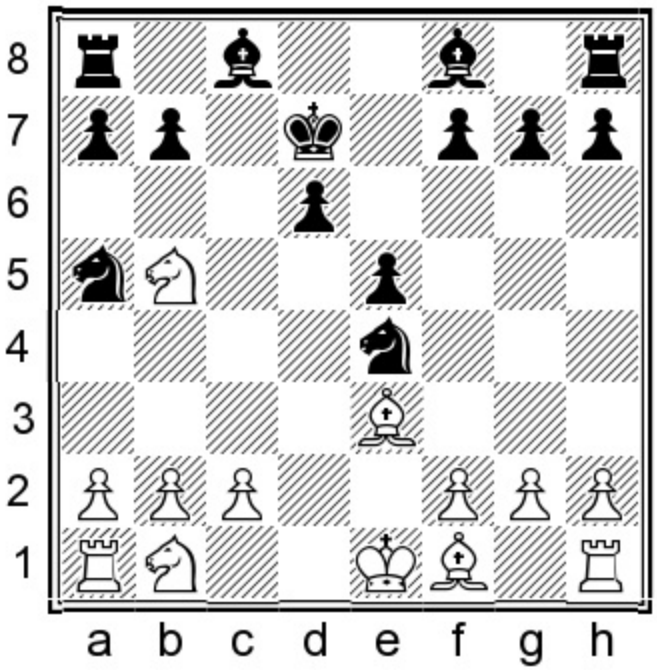
9...♘xe4 10.♕xa5 ♘xa5 11.♗e3

Of course, not 11.♘c7† ♔d7 12.♘xa8 ♘xg5 and, since the a8-knight will not escape to freedom, the advantage is with Black.

11...♔d7

Up to this point, all according to our analysis. My seconds and I had analysed further either 12.♘xa7 d5!? (which, incidentally, in his pre-match commentary to one of his games Fischer himself had recommended! 22), or 12.♗xa7 ♘c6, with a comfortable game for Black in both cases. I soon had to say goodbye to these illusions...

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12.♘1c3

Here is the answer to all of the questions! Fischer does not hurry to re-establish material equality, but strives to exploit the clumsy positions of the black pieces. And the method for this is purely classical – rapid mobilization of forces and the initiative along the open files and diagonals. Bravo, Bobby!

The most curious thing is that when after the game I asked him about his preparation, Fischer modestly said that the idea itself did not belong to him, but to A. Nikitin and he came across it in a monograph by the Soviet master, where there was a small footnote with the recommendation of the move 12.♘1c3!. Fischer, in his own words "simply developed the suggested idea". 23 Astonishingly, I – a specialist in the Sicilian Defence – had overlooked a theoretically important remark from my compatriot and respected colleague, while Fischer 'spotted' it in a foreign-language book! The late A. Kotov was right, when he noted that "Fischer knows everything that is written about chess and tested on the chessboard."

12...♘xc3

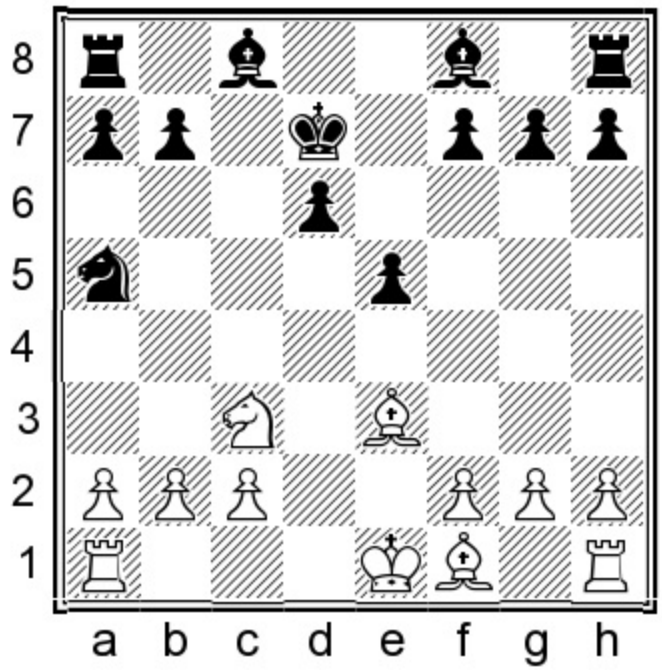
This exchange, instead of losing time on the retreat, seemed to me to be completely obvious, but 11 years later an inquisitive analytical mind suggested a different solution: the Bulgarian grandmaster Kirov, in a game against Lukov in the tournament at Pamporovo, cleverly and unexpectedly played here 12...a6!? and after the obvious continuation 13.♘xe4 axb5 14.♗xb5† ♔c7 15.0-0-0 ♗e6, at the cost of the pawn won earlier, neutralized White's initiative and equalized the game. This is how theory develops! 24

13.♘xc3

An instructive position. At first sight, things are not too bad for Black. He has an extra pawn and a solid position in the centre, while the somewhat clumsy state of his king and the knight on the edge

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of the board are not so significant in the absence of queens. But Fischer's assessment was much deeper and more accurate. He correctly believed that the activity of his pieces – especially the bishops – with the possibility of opening the game in the centre, guaranteed the initiative, compensating with interest for the minimal material loss.



13...♔d8

The choice of this move did not come easily to me. It was obvious that I would sooner or later have to part with the d6-pawn, but what alternatives was I presented with? The practice of recent years has gone through several plans of defence, but, alas, not one fully satisfactory one has been found. Here are some examples:

a) 13...♗e7 14.0-0-0 ♖d8 15.♘d5 ♘c6 16.♗b5 and Black's position is very difficult (Adorján – Bobotsov, Amsterdam 1971).

b) 13...b6 14.0-0-0 (also good is the immediate 14.f4!?) 14...♗b7 15.f4 ♘c6 16.♗b5 with a dangerous initiative for White (Korzubov – Vyzmanavin, USSR 1983).

c) 13...♔c7 14.♘d5† (less convincing is 14.♘b5† ♔b8 15.0-0-0 in view of 15...♗e6 16.♘xd6 ♗xd6 17.♖xd6 ♔c7 18.♖d3 ♘c6, as occurred in Gligorić – Damjanović, Yugoslavia 1971) 14...♔b8 15.0-0-0 ♗e6 16.f4!? and Black has difficult problems in mobilizing his forces (a recommendation of Polugaevsky).

All in all, in going through these variations (I think that the examples are similar to those that I considered during the game), one may come to the conclusion that in general there was no real path to equality for Black, and the preference of one plan or another became a purely subjective problem.

14.♘b5 ♗e6

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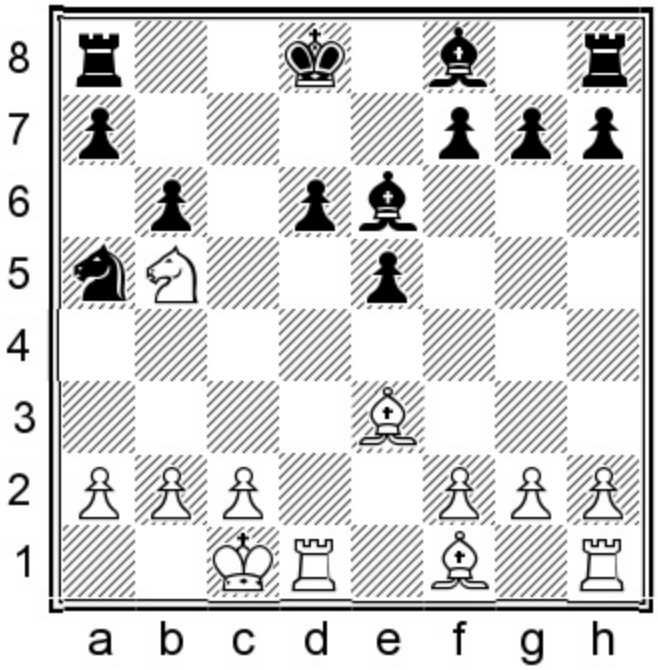
The mobilization of forces is Black's main concern.

The tempting 14...d5 will not do in view of 15.♗xa7 with the threat of 16.♗b6† and 17.♘c7.

15.0-0-0 b6

This difficult move is forced on account of the extremely unpleasant threat of 16.♘xd6 ♗xd6 17.♗c5!, which could have followed in the case of the natural continuations 15...♗e7 or 15...♘c6.

15...♘c4 is of no help on account of the simple 16.♗xa7.



16.f4

Fischer is Fischer! He is not tempted by the possibility of regaining the pawn by the simple method 16.♘xd6, in view of 16...♗xd6 17.♖xd6† ♔e7 18.♖d1 ♘c4, nor by the tactical blow 16.♘xa7 on account of 16...♔c7 17.♘b5† ♔c6. For him the initiative is more important than material acquisition. In connection with the inevitable opening of the game in the centre, White's threats take on an ever more dangerous character.

16...exf4

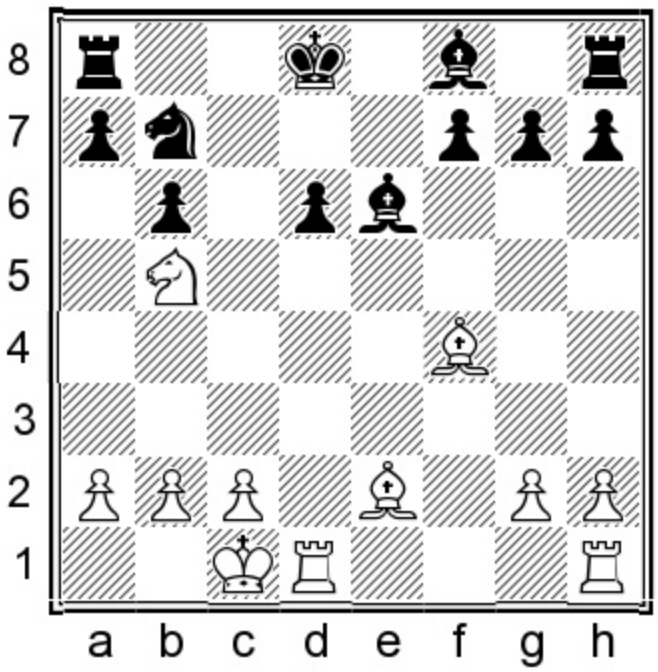
Black's defensive method is the most rapid possible consolidation of his forces. Since the d6-pawn is all the same doomed, the main task is to give it up at the cost of numerous exchanges.

Within the framework of this strategic concept, alternative continuations were inexpedient – 16...e4, in view of 17.♘xd6 ♗xd6 18.♖xd6† ♔e7 19.♖d4 f5 20.♗f2!, and 16...f6 on account of 17.fxe5 fxe5 18.♘xd6 ♗xd6 19.♖xd6† ♔e7 20.♖d1 h6 21.♗f2 ♖hd8 22.♖e1!, in both cases with perceptible positional pressure for White.

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17.♗xf4 ♘b7 18.♗e2

White's pressure grows as if by itself. 19.♗f3 is also threatened.



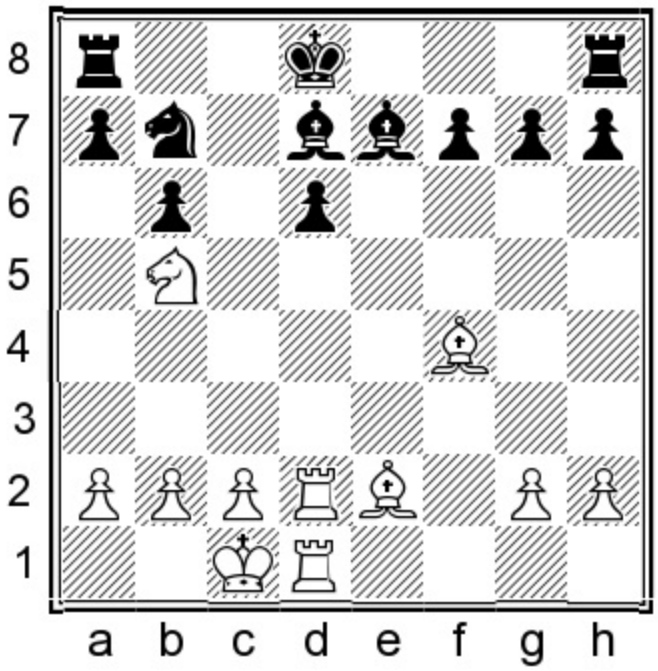
18...♗d7

Black has to defend, as they say, 'with clenched teeth'. He cannot permit himself any freeing attempt involving even the slightest weakening of the pawn chain.

For instance, in the case of the tempting 18...a6 there would have followed simply 19.♘xd6 ♘xd6 20.♗xd6 ♗xd6 21.♖xd6† ♔c7 22.♖hd1 and, since Black does not have the reply 22...♖ad8 (the a-pawn) he is helpless against the manoeuvre 23.♗f3.

19.♖d2!? ♗e7 20.♖hd1

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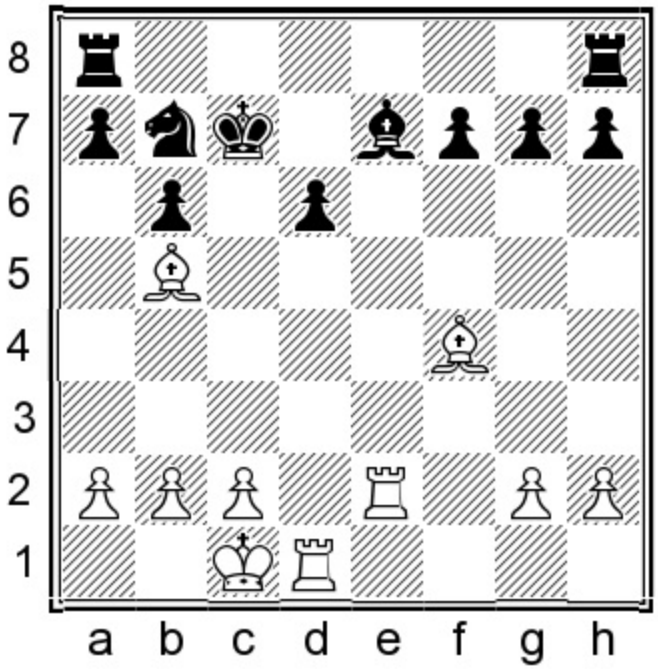
20...♗xb5 25

The knight cannot be tolerated any longer. The advantage of the two bishops has to be ceded to the opponent, but something akin to the consolidation of forces is now achieved.

21.♗xb5 ♔c7

Finally the black pieces are coming into coordination.

22.♖e2!

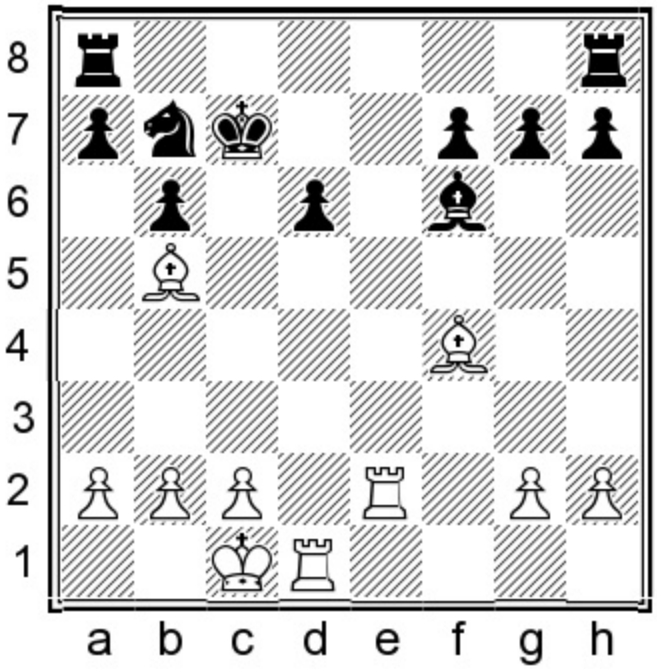


It is amazing how Fischer sensed the dynamics of the initiative! Despite the courageous and stubborn defence by the opponent, despite the noticeable simplification of the position, he all the time

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succeeded in ‘tossing coal into the furnace’ of the attack. The work has been done on the d-file – the lever of threats is switched to the e-file.

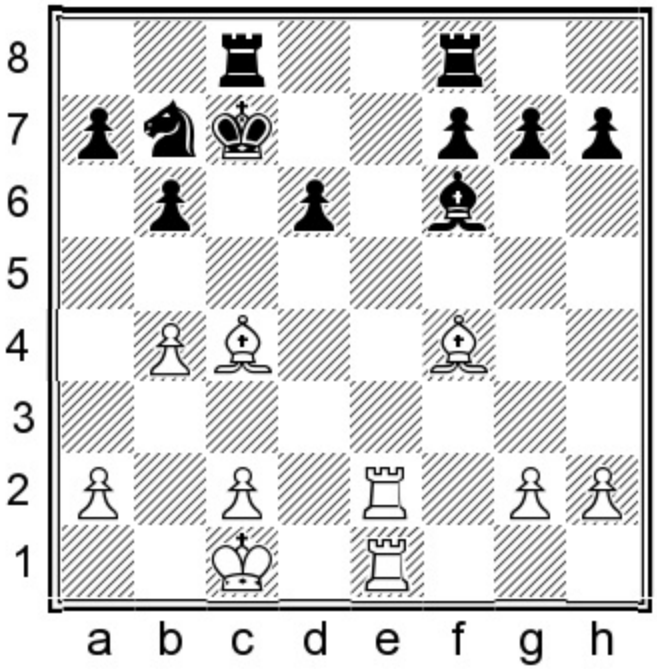
22...♗f6



23.♖de1 ♖ac8

Once again the only move, the aim of which is to neutralize the eventual danger of an exchange sacrifice on e7. For instance, 23...♘c5 24.♖e7†! ♗xe7 25.♖xe7† ♔d8 26.♖xf7, and Black is helpless.

24.♗c4 ♖hf8 25.b4!



Fischer is in his element! With the minimum of means he achieves the maximum results. The

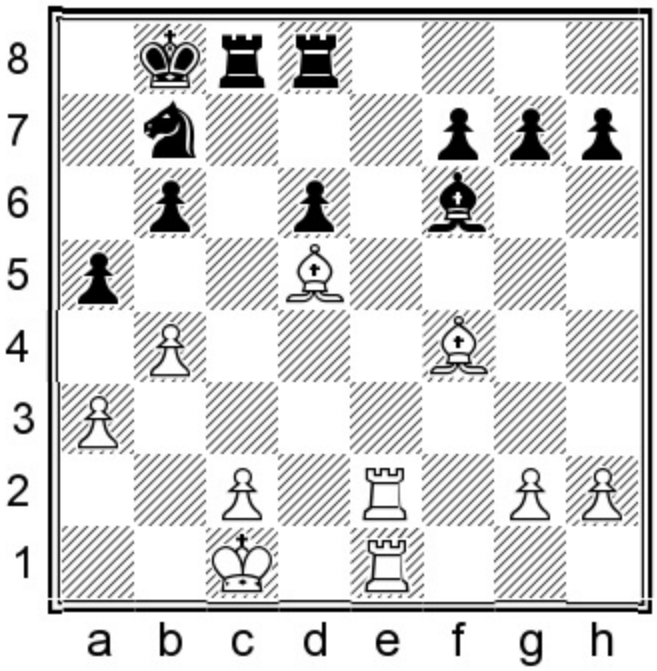
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white pieces are dominating over the whole board, while the black ones are squeezed to the limit. But all the same, the defensive resources are not exhausted.

25...a5! 26.♗d5!? ♔b8 27.a3 ♖fd8!

The best chance. Returning the booty (the extra pawn proves useful because it can in time be given away!), Black tries to at least slightly activate his forces for an alluring 'hint' of counterplay.

On the passive 27...axb4 28.axb4 ♖c7, things would have been altogether sad for Black after 29.♗e3! ♔a7 30.c4.



28.♗xf7

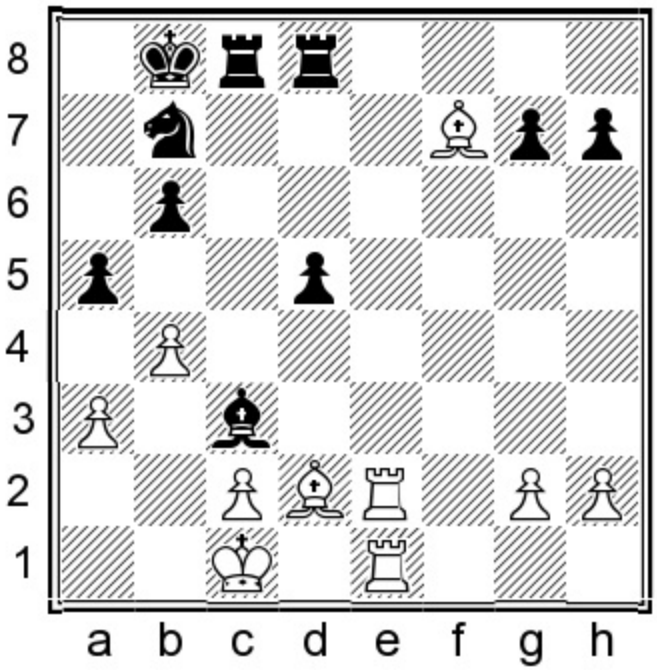
Possibly only here, for the first time in the game, Fischer was deflected from his general strategy – playing for a total grip on the position.

More consistent and stronger was 28.♖e4!, so as on 28...♖c7 (28...♗c3 will not do in view of 29.♖e7) to have the energetic manoeuvre 29.♗e3!, increasing the initiative.

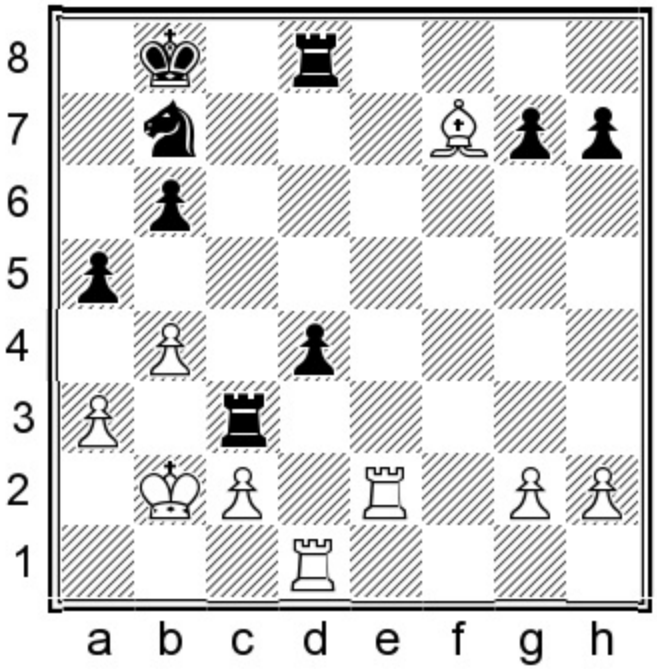
Instead the character of the struggle now changes noticeably, and Black manages to at least break out of the vice. The following events develop by force.

28...♗c3 29.♗d2 d5!

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30.♖d1 d4 31.♗xc3 ♖xc3 32.♔b2



32...d3! 33.♔xc3 dxe2 34.♖e1

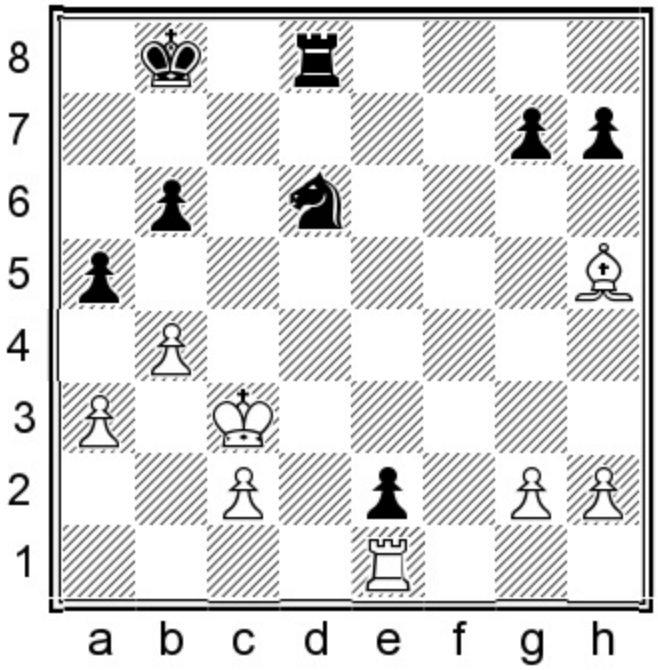
Naturally, not 34.♖xd8†, since after 34...♘xd8 White loses a piece.

34...♘d6 35.♗h5

If this position is compared with that in the previous diagram, one is struck by an incredible metamorphosis! Within only a few moves material equality has been re-established and piece exchanges have taken place. The 'doomed' black pawn on d6 has completed a rapid dash to the e2-square, and the play has passed to an endgame. Here, although White retains a positional advantage (it is obvious that the e2-pawn will become his easy prey), Black's forces have gained their long-

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awaited freedom and can now not only repulse the opponent's onslaught, as they have been doing for the whole game, but can also create counter-threats.



35...♘b5†?!

In approaching time trouble (which was natural, having been forced to incessantly solve the problems that were literally piled up by Fischer's inexhaustible fantasy), it was difficult to choose between the tempting active possibilities 35...♘b5† and 35...♖c8† (35...♘e4† can be discounted in view of 36.♔b3), but my intuition – on which one mainly relies in such cases – on this occasion let me down...

As analysis later showed, the continuation 35...♖c8† should have been preferred, with the following possible branches of play:

a) 36.♔b3 ♘b5! 37.c4 ♘d4† 38.♔c3 ♘b5† with the desired draw.

b) 36.♔b2 ♘c4† 37.♔b3 (37.♔a2 ♘e3!) 37...♘d2† 38.♔a4 g6! 39.♗g4 (39.♖xe2 ♘b1!; 39.♗xe2 axb4 40.axb4 ♖xc2) 39...♖xc2 40.♖xe2 axb4 41.axb4 ♖c4!? and Black has good chances to save this punishing game.

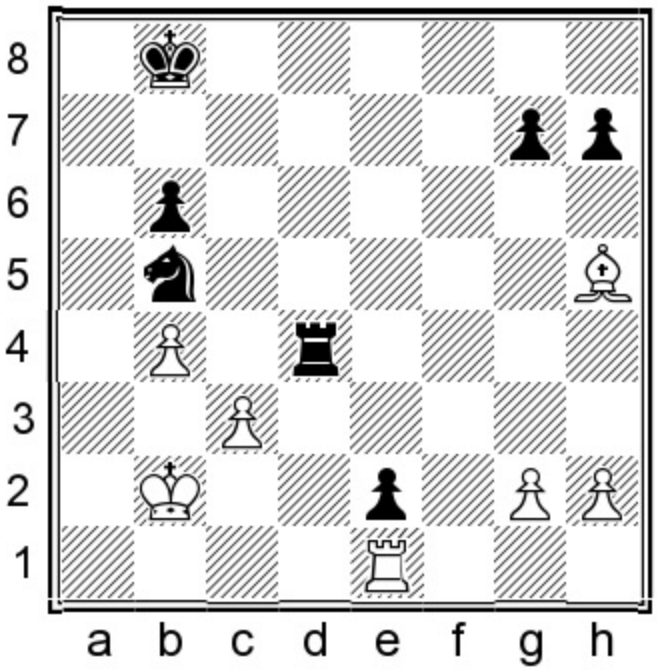
Such a turnaround of events would have been a fair reward for my tenacious defence, and punishment for Fischer for his lapse on the 28th move. Instead, everything now goes back to 'square one'...

36.♔b2 axb4 37.axb4 ♖d4

Or 37...g6 38.♗f3 (38.♗xe2? ♖e8) 38...♘d4 39.♗e4 ♖e8 40.♗d3 and Black stands badly.

38.c3

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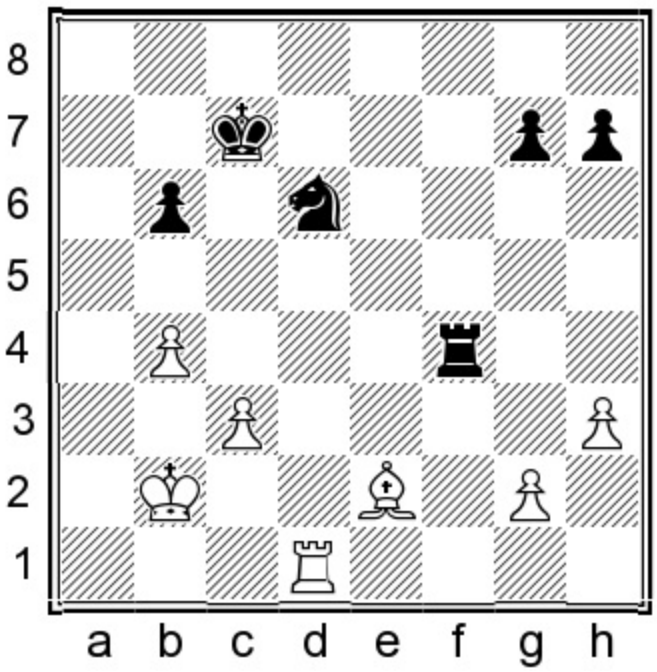
38...♖h4

Alas, 38...♖d2† 39.♔b3 ♖d3 will not do on account of 40.♔c4.

39.♗xe2 ♘d6 40.♖d1!? ♔c7 41.h3 ♖f4

Time trouble is over, but the problems remain. There are very few chances of salvation.

41...b5 is also of no help in view of 42.♖d5 ♔c6 43.♖c5† ♔b6 44.♗f3.

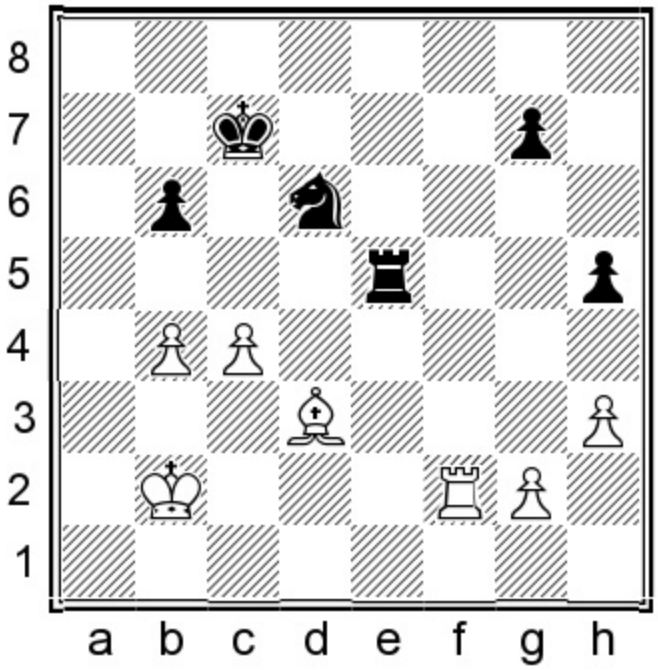


42.♖f1 ♖e4 43.♗d3 ♖e5 44.♖f2 h5 45.c4

In this position the game was adjourned. White has an extra pawn and active pieces; in short, the win is a matter of technique, and Fischer had plenty of it. But all the same, there was still a lot of

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excitement ahead for the opponents.



45...♖g5

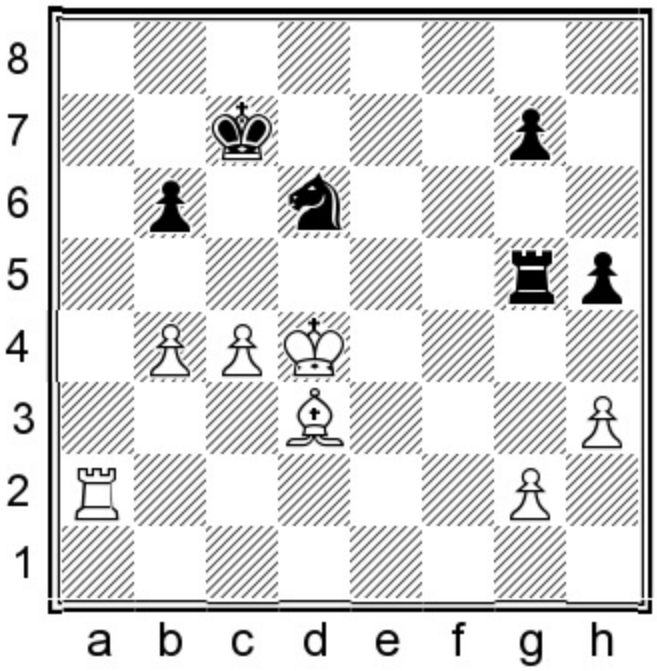
My sealed move was not very successful.

More tenacious, probably, was 45...♖e3. Then 46.♔c3 ♘e4† 47.♔d4 ♖xd3† 48.♔xe4, recommended by many commentators in this case, is not so convincing in view of 48...♖g3. 26

46.♔c3 ♔d7 47.♖a2 ♔c8 48.♔d4 ♔c7

For the time being Black still 'holds the zone', but senses that the timely preparation of the advance c4-c5 will sweep away his defence.

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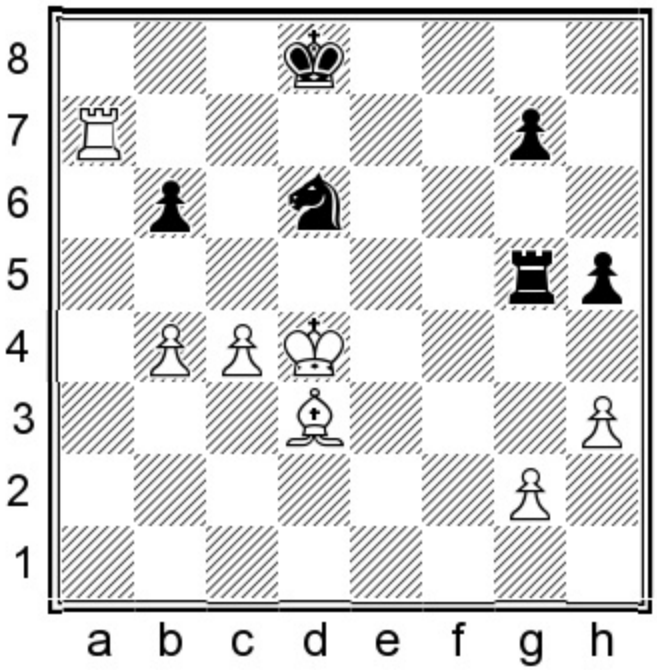


49.♖a7†

It is astonishing that in one of 'his' purely technical positions, and moreover after home analysis, Fischer fails to find the most effective method of realizing the advantage.

By continuing 49.♖e2 27 49...♔d7 (49...♔d8 50.♖e6 ♔d7 51.♖g6) 50.c5 bxc5† 51.bxc5 ♘c8 52.♗b5† ♔c7 (or 52...♔d8 53.♖e8† ♔c7 54.♗a6!) 53.♗c4 (also good is 53.♗a6) Fischer could have markedly activated his forces.

49...♔d8



50.c5

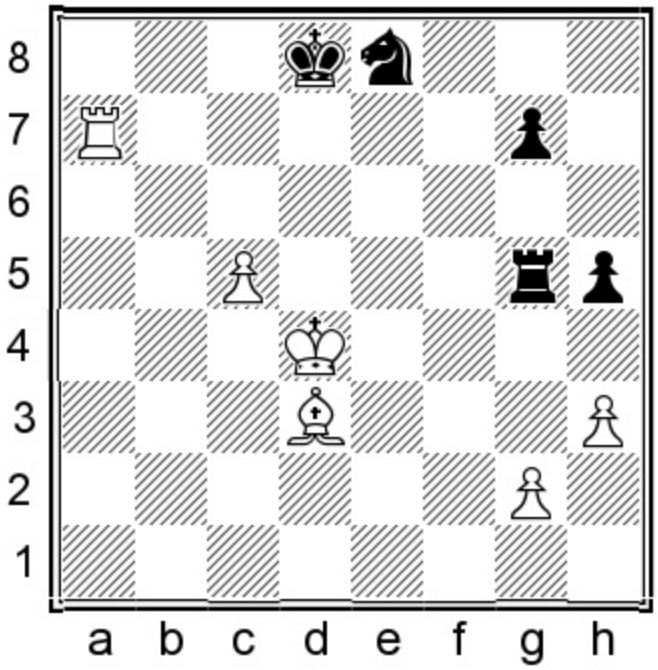
Evidently, Fischer did not choose the most successful moment for this programmed advance.

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Deserving clear preference was the inclusion of the moves 50.♖a6 ♔c7, and only then 51.c5!.

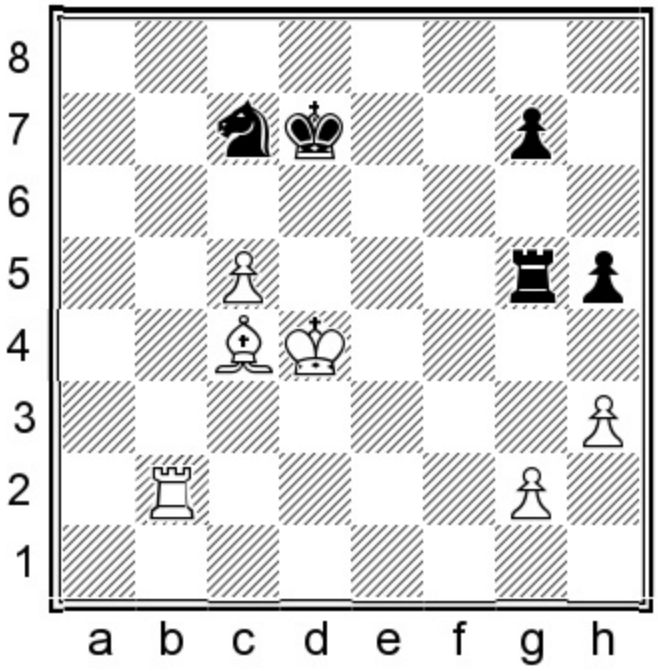
50...bxc5† 51.bxc5 ♘e8!

The knight transfers to the blockading square on c7 and to shift it from there will not be simple.



52.♖a2 ♘c7 53.♗c4 ♔d7 54.♖b2?!

Possibly, the manoeuvre 54.♗b3?! would have confronted Black with more problems, but clearly, at some point Fischer's characteristic filigree endgame accuracy had deserted him.



54...♔c6! 55.♗b3

Nothing is changed by 55.♖b6†, since after 55...♔d7 the g2-pawn proves to be undefended.

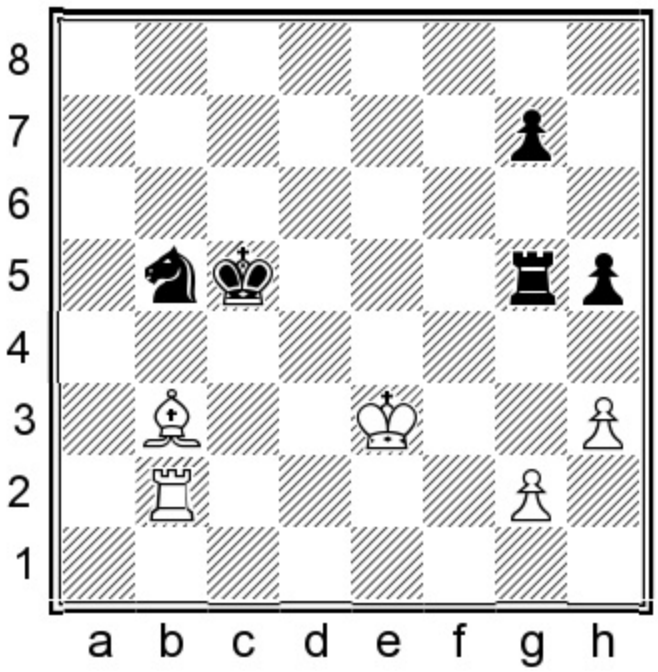
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55...♘b5†

Naturally, not immediately 55...♖xc5? on account of 56.♗a4†.

56.♔e3 ♔xc5

Finally, for the first time in this difficult game I could breathe easily. The draw is now, as they say, a stone's throw away. But Fischer always fought until the complete exhaustion of the resources, and he still retained minimal winning chances thanks to the activity of his king.

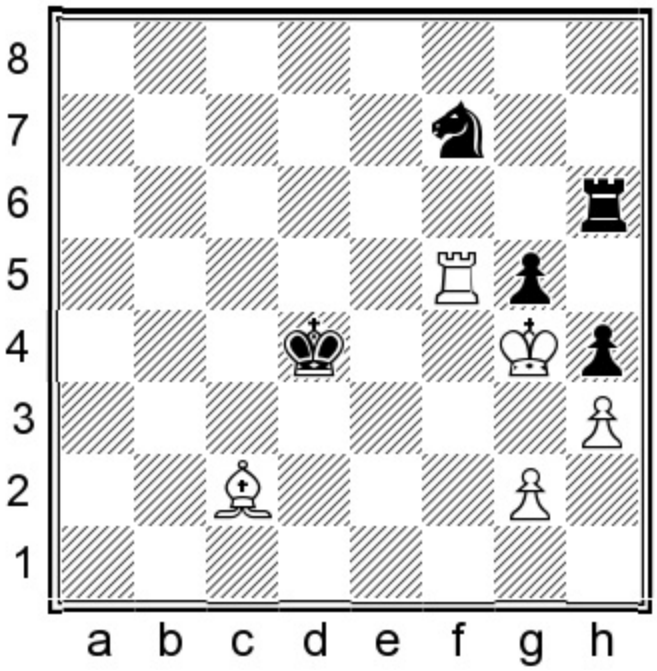


57.♔f4 ♖g6 58.♗d1 h4 59.♔f5 ♖h6 60.♔g5 ♘d6

Quickly to the rescue!

61.♗c2 ♘f7† 62.♔g4 ♘e5† 63.♔f4 ♔d4 64.♖b4† ♔c3 65.♖b5 ♘f7 66.♖c5† ♔d4 67.♖f5 g5† 68.♔g4

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68...♘e5†

Fischer's incredible persistence bears fruit – at any rate the opponent decided to voluntarily part with a pawn. It is another matter that in the given simple situation this is by no means sufficient for victory, but in a one-to-one battle, factors of morale are always significant.

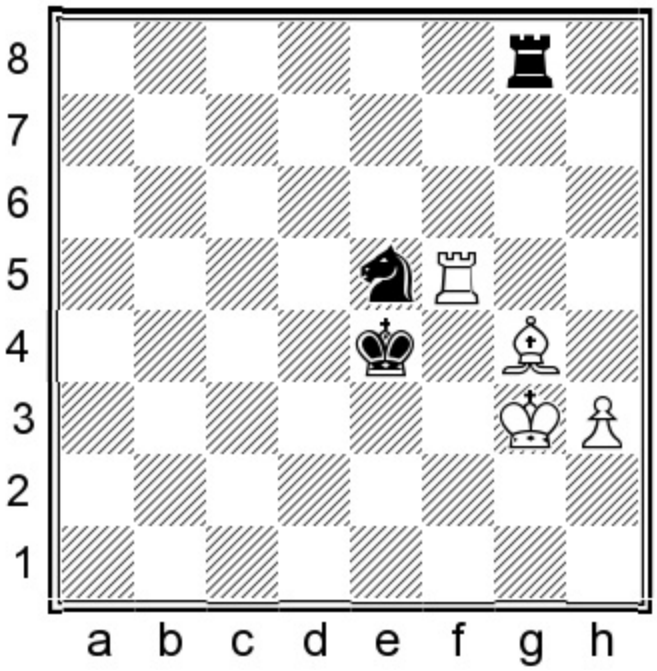
Incidentally, at Black's disposal there was an alternative path to the draw, and moreover, a still more forcing one: 68...♖c6 69.♗a4 (if 69.♖xf7 then 69...♖xc2 70.♔xg5 ♖xg2† 71.♔xh4 ♔e5) 69...♘h6† 70.♔xg5 ♘xf5 71.♗xc6 ♔e5 and White cannot advantageously avoid the planned variation 72...♘e3! 73.♔xh4 ♘xg2† 74.♗xg2 ♔f6.

69.♔xg5 ♖g6† 70.♔xh4 ♖xg2 71.♗d1 ♖g8

Still simpler was 71...♘g6† 72.♔h5 ♔e4!.

72.♗g4 ♔e4 73.♔g3

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In this position the game was adjourned for a second time. Even with a cursory glance at the position that has arisen, there is no doubt about the endgame diagnosis – a draw without any problems. Tal later wrote: “All the same, Fischer’s character is astonishing! I, for instance, (and indeed, not only I) would not have adjourned this position in any tournament situation – it would be a waste of time. But Fischer plays until only the kings are left!” Many times, and moreover without any satisfaction, I came to be convinced of this...

Thus, the game would be resumed once again. But not the next day; instead, as it proved to my misfortune, this would take place only after the following tragic battle...

And therefore first off we had to analyse the situation prevailing at the start and to get into the mood for a new duel. I clearly recall that I had no feelings of unease at all regarding the course of events. Despite what I had experienced, I was still optimistic. Of course, in the 2nd game I had felt the full strength of my formidable opponent – excellent opening preparation, deep positional feeling, an iron grip, incredible persistence and confidence in his powers; in short, I understood that a difficult test lay ahead of me. But there was also plenty of basis for internal satisfaction. There was no doubt that in the first encounter I had held the initiative, while in the second I had courageously withstood a typical Fischer onslaught and expected to save a difficult endgame a pawn down. That Fischer had ‘helped me’ in this the day before was also considered a favourable sign – the great American was human, and if even he had committed technical errors, it meant that “Bobby is not so terrible as he is painted.”

Who could have foreseen that within only three days everything would have turned to dust, and of these bright illusions not even a trace would remain.

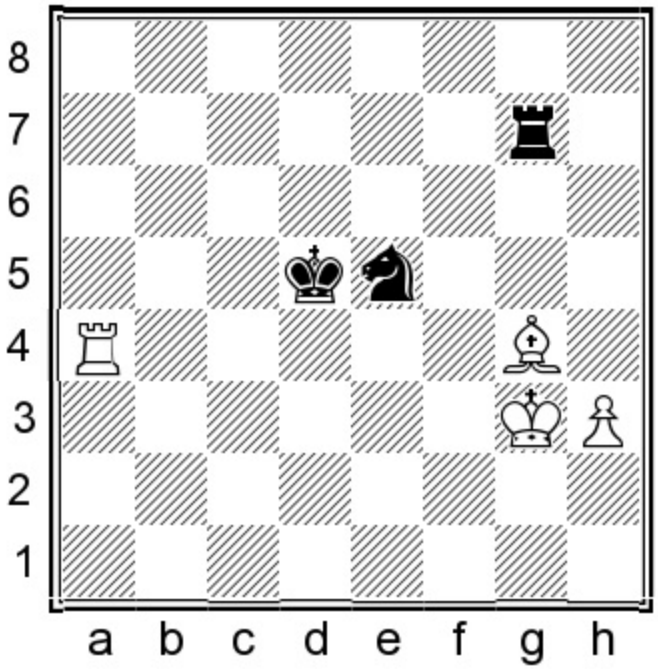
Running ahead, I will say that in the 3rd game I was fated to experience a genuinely brutal disappointment – instead of the impending win, I lost helplessly – and this dreadful fiasco also determined the outcome of the 2nd game, adjourned the day before, as well as the following course of events, and the crushing result of the whole match, and many, many things in my life...

For the sake of the overall perception of the match, I will continue the analysis of the 2nd game,

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having taken into account the circumstances of the adjourned session... Thus, on the resumption of play there followed:

73...♖g7 74.♖f4† ♔d5 75.♖a4



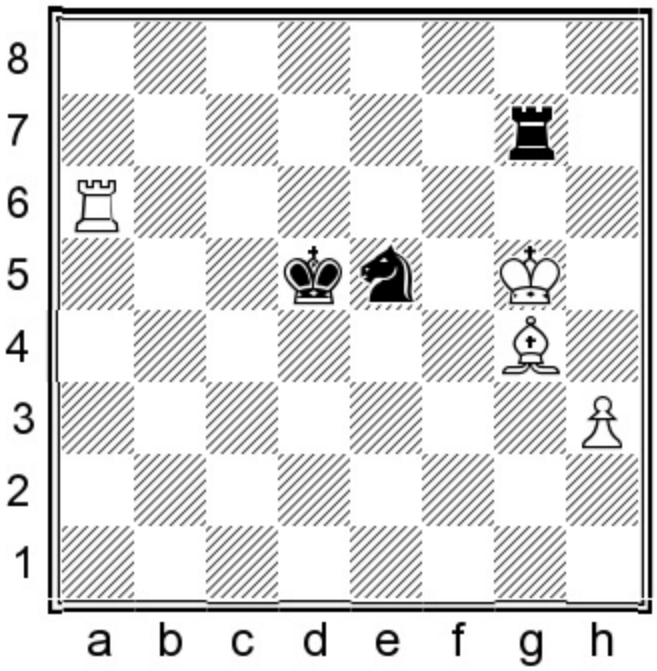
75...♘g6

To achieve a theoretical draw, sufficient was simply: 75...♘xg4 76.hxg4 ♔e6 77.♔h4 (77.♖f4 ♖f7!) 77...♖g8! For instance, 78.♔h5 ♔f7 79.♖a7† ♔f6 80.♖a6† ♔f7 81.g5 ♖h8† 82.♖h6 ♖a8 etc.

76.♖a6 ♘e5 77.♔f4 ♘g6† 28

78.♔g5 ♘e5†

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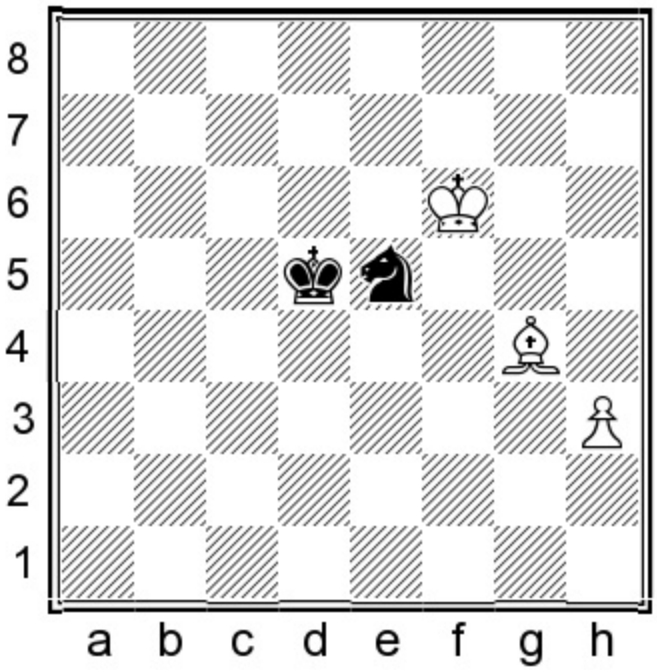
79.♔f5

On 79.♔h6 there would of course have followed 79...♖xg4.

79...♖f7† 80.♖f6

A final attempt that was unexpectedly crowned with success.

80...♖xf6† 81.♔xf6



81...♔e4??

Incredible! One can understand when a grandmaster leaves a piece exposed to attack or even

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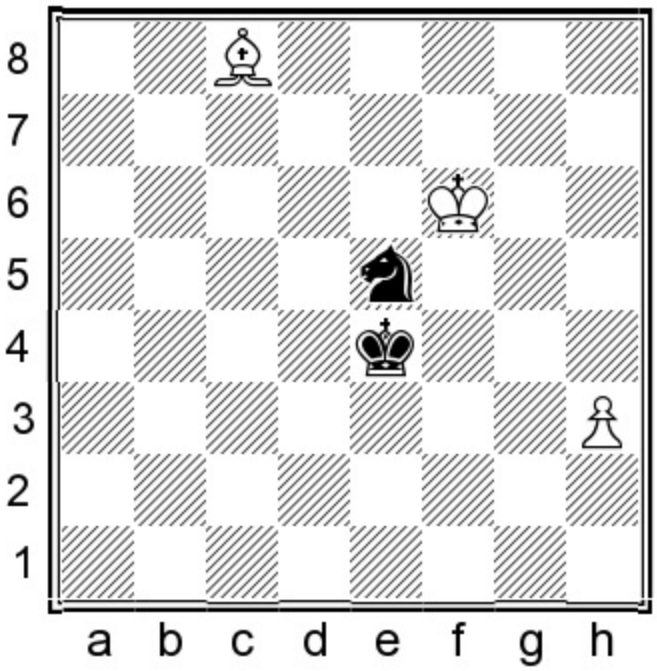
blunders into a mate – what does not happen to ‘mere mortals’? But to break a textbook rule, known from one’s childhood years like 2 x 2 = 4?!

Twenty years have passed since this unforgettable adjourned session, but I can still recall as if in a nightmare this monstrous king move to the opposite side from the ‘drawing corner’, f8. It was some kind of blackout...

Clearly, 81...♘d3 82.h4 (or 82.♔f5 ♔d6) 82...♘f4 83.♔f5 ♔d6, as well as 81...♔d6 82.♗e2 ♘d7† 83.♔f7 ♔e5 84.h4 ♘f6 led to an elementary draw.

Now, instead, there comes a catastrophe.

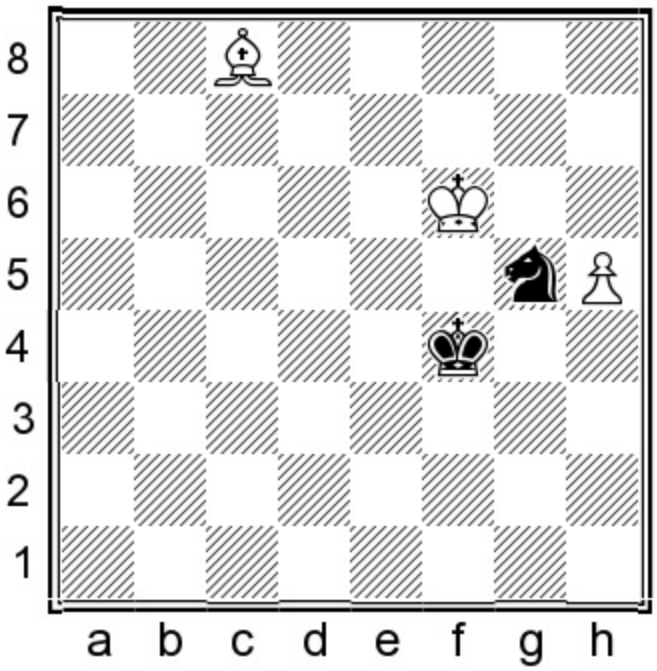
82.♗c8!



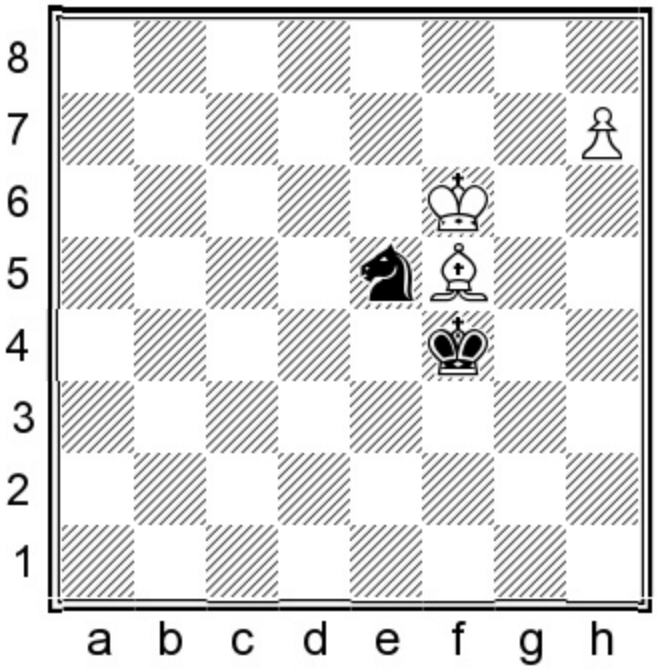
Domination! The knight cannot hold up the pawn either from the f3-square (83.♗b7†) or via d3 (83.♗f5†), and the pawn marches unhindered to the ill-fated h8-square.

82...♔f4 83.h4 ♘f3 84.h5 ♘g5

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85.♗f5! ♘f3 86.h6 ♘g5 87.♔g6 ♘f3 88.h7 ♘e5† 89.♔f6



Black resigned. A tragic finale.

1–0

Let us now turn to the critical duel which became the culminating point in the match and determined the entire course of future events and, as will be seen from the preceding game... also past ones.

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GAME 3

Mark Taimanov – Robert James Fischer

Candidates quarter-final (3), Vancouver 1971

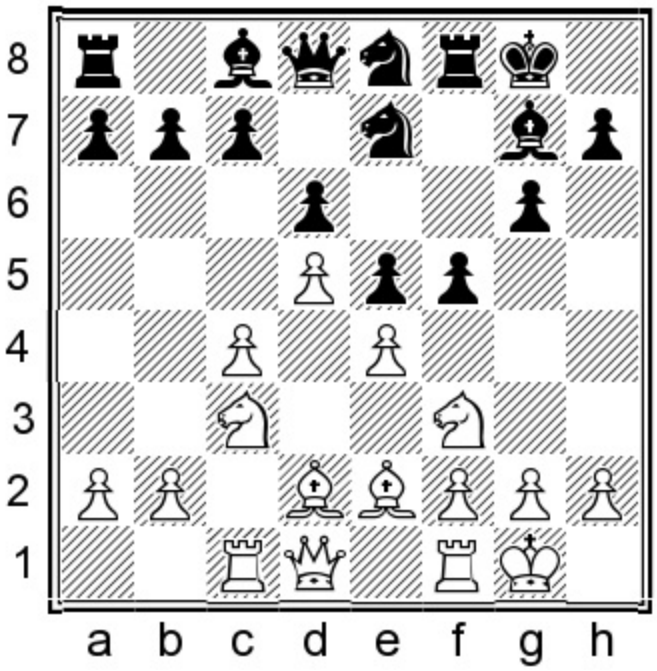
King's Indian Defence

That on the eve of this encounter, when the score was 0–1, the 'psychological wind' was in my sails, and that I was full of bright hopes and belief in my powers, the reader already knows. I will add only that, being convinced of the constancy of Fischer's opening tastes, I did not doubt that the dispute in the main line, encountered in the 1st game, would continue. The more so since concerning the opening of that game my opponent would certainly have retained pleasant memories. But for the coming discussion my seconds and I had prepared new, important arguments...

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♗g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♗e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7 9.♗d2 ♘e8 10.♖c1 f5

Thus, the beginning of the game has effectively been shifted by ten moves, as in the ancient *tabiya*. Now the question is who will be the first to turn aside from the trodden path...

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11.♕b3!?

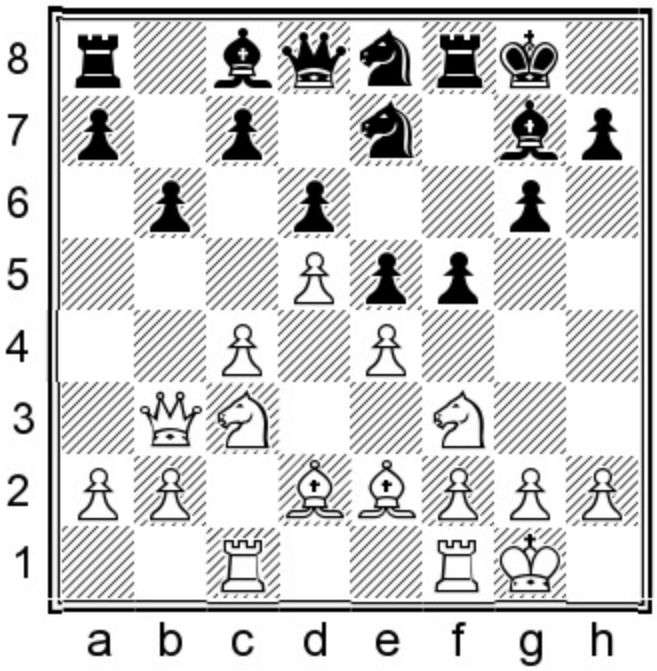
The first word was mine! This was our preparation for the battle! The idea of the transfer of the knight to e6 followed by the opening of the centre remains, as in the 1st game, the main strategic motif, but its tactical form is sharply dynamized. From b3 the queen directs 'X-rays' onto the black king, and at the same time 'casts a glance' at the b7-pawn, which, after the eventual exchange of bishop for knight on e6, could be deprived of defence. The theoretical dispute with Fischer took on new momentum!

11...b6

Fischer thought over this move for rather a long time (which is evidence of a recognition of the merit of the opponent's idea) and clearly came to a conclusion regarding the necessity to first and foremost stop the advance c4-c5, which would have facilitated the opening of the strategically important c-file by White.

Subsequently analysts, by way of alternatives, put forward the ideas of 11...f4 (Boleslavsky) and 11...♔h8 (Tal), which have their reasons.

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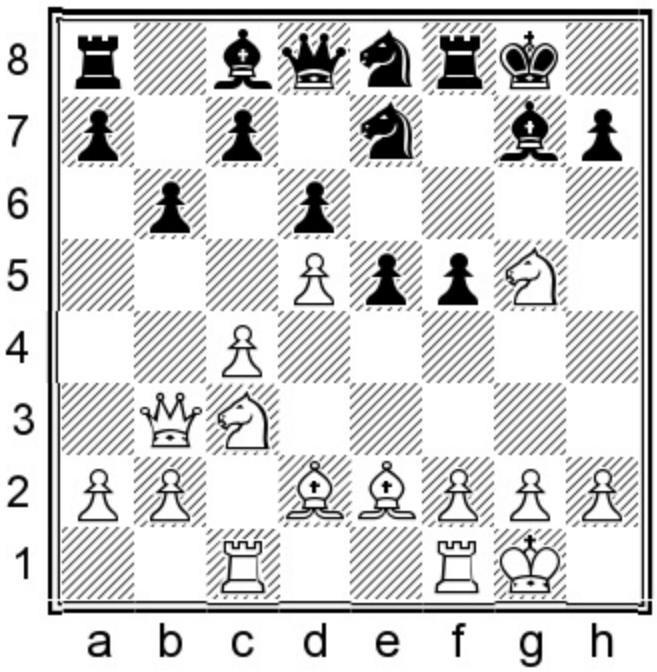
12.exf5 gxf5

As always, Fischer acts in principled fashion.

After 12...♘xf5 or 12...♗xf5 the possession of the e4-outpost would have defined a stable positional advantage for White.

13.♘g5

The general plan in action – the knight aims at e6.



13...♘f6

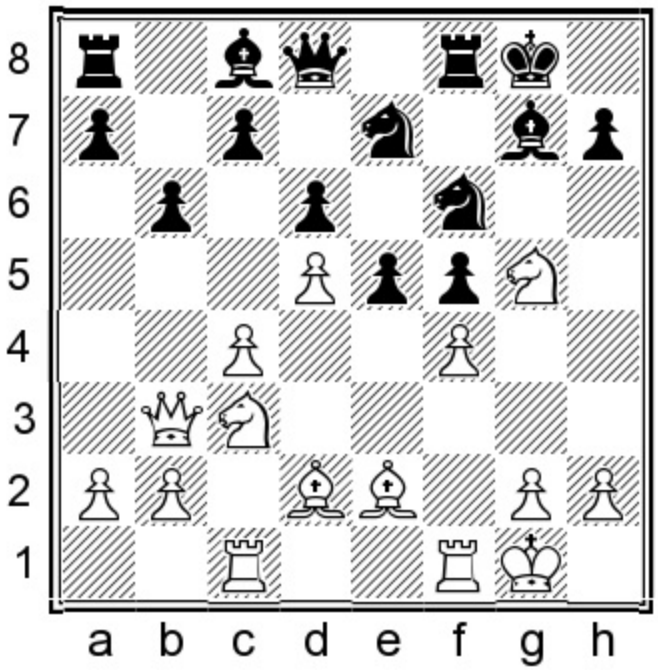
In the case of 13...h6 14.♘e6 ♗xe6 15.dxe6 ♕c8 (or 15...c6 16.♗h5!) highly promising is 16.♘d5

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♕xe6 17.♘xe7† ♕xe7 18.c5† ♔h8 19.cxd6 ♘xd6 (or 19...cxd6 20.♖fd1 followed by ♗b4) 20.♖c6!, which was confirmed by a game of mine against M. Tseitlin, played two years later.

14.f4!

An important link in the plan thought up by White, the significance of which Fischer had evidently underestimated...



14...h6

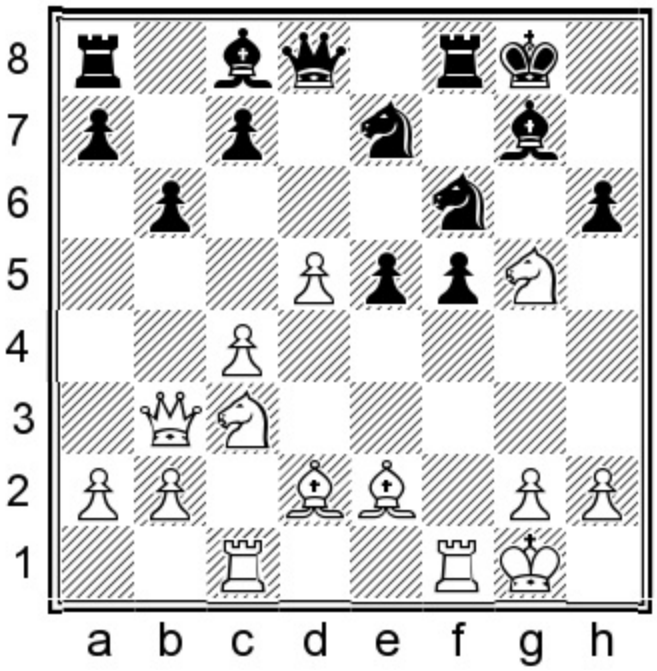
Fischer believes in the safety of Black's set-up and boldly enters the uncompromising conflict.

More circumspect, but also more 'concessionary' would have been 14...e4, although in this case White, with 15.♘d1 h6 16.♘h3 followed by ♘e3, ♘f2 and ♗c3, achieves obvious positional privileges. Conformism was alien to Fischer and he never went in for such passive continuations.

15.fxe5! dxe5

Clearly, the continuation 15...hxg5 16.exf6 ♗xf6 17.♗h5 could not have appealed to Fischer.

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16.c5!

But this blow, I think, proved for Fischer to be an unexpected and upsetting surprise. White's battery of pieces comes into action!

However, had I been in a less belligerent mood, I could have been satisfied with the modest 16.♘f3, retaining undoubted positional pluses for White.

16...♘fxd5

Obviously, the alternative 16...hxg5 17.d6† ♔h8 18.dxe7 ♕xe7 19.cxb6 axb6 20.♗xg5 was not at all attractive; as was the case with the reply 16...♔h8 in view of 17.d6!.

A hand-to-hand skirmish is beginning, demanding bold imagination, accurate calculation and... sound nerves. Incidentally, in this game nerves played 'tricks' on both players. I recall how at one of the moments in the game, after having made a move I, as per my age-old habit, arose from the table to stroll around the stage. Fischer, unexpectedly interrupting his thought, complained via his *chargé d'affaires* Ed Edmondson to the Head Arbiter Božidar Kažić that my movement was disturbing him. Kažić diplomatically passed this on to me, adding that for his part he could not support Fischer's demand, since I was within my rights to walk on my half of the stage. But, not wanting any conflict, I proposed a gentlemanly compromise – if Bobby for his part would refrain from his habit of 'drumming' on the floor with his feet, I would go for my walk behind the curtains... Fischer agreed and a consensus was found...

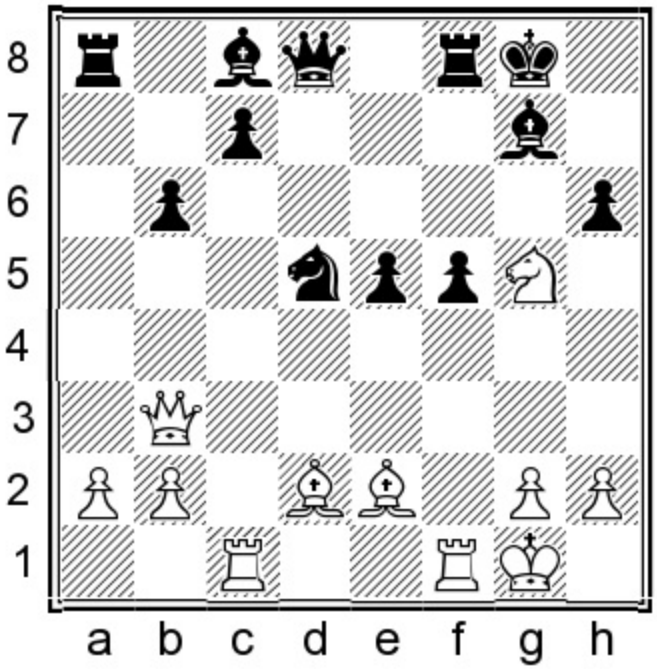
But we return to the game, which at this point is entering its most dramatic phase.

17.♘xd5 ♘xd5 18.cxb6 axb6

Clearly, the continuation 18...hxg5 19.♗xg5 ♕d6 20.b7 ♗xb7 21.♕xb7 was altogether

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unfavourable for Black.



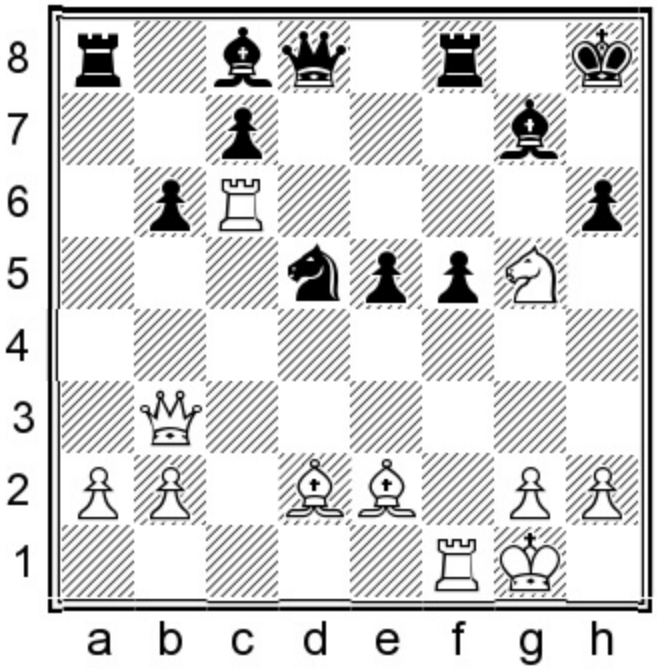
19.♖c6!

The point of the large-scale tactical operation, essentially begun by White eight moves ago! All of his pieces are occupying formidable positions, while the eventual inclusion in the attack of the bishop on c4 puts the opponent in a critical situation.

19...♔h8

Perhaps the only means of defence.

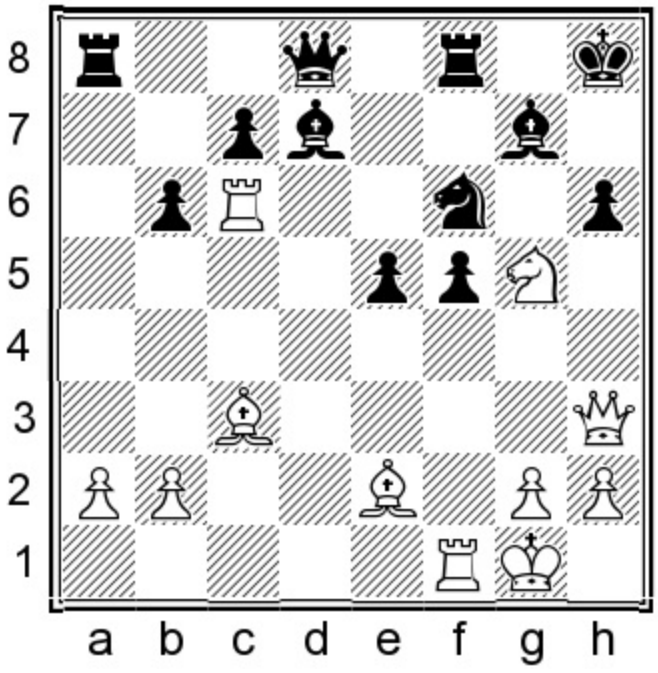
In the case of 19...hxg5 20.♗c4 ♔h8 21.♗xd5 f4 (or 21...g4) 22.♖c3! it would not have been possible to prevent the twin dangers – 23.♖h3† and 23.♗xa8.



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I will not skimp on another diagram, since it not only reflects the culminating moment in this game and in the match as a whole (Fischer himself later admitted, “This was the turning point in the match. Taimanov missed a win with the move 20.♕h3.”), but it also serves as a reference point for all of the dramatic, unpredictable twists and turns that subsequently befell me, and about which the reader has already been told.

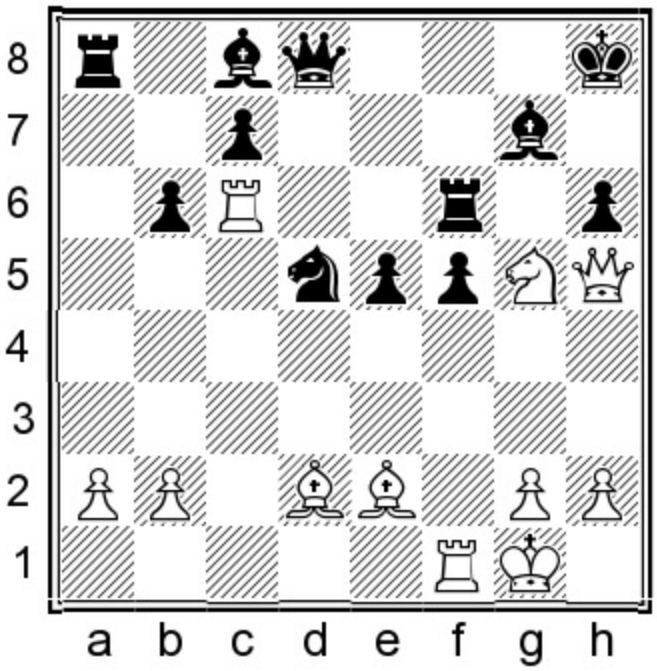
I recall that at this point I was experiencing a genuine competitive thrill – I assessed the position as highly promising, I was happy at the success of the opening innovation, and had quickly caught on to the idea of developing the initiative – the manoeuvre 20.♕h3. In short, I believed in my success. Could anyone have predicted that it would all end in ruin? The disappointment began from the moment when, having assessed the position rosily, I proceeded to the concrete calculation of variations. It was obvious that after 20.♕h3 in view of the threat of 21.♖xh6† Black had only two defences – 20...♘f6 and 20...♖f6. I began to analyse them in the happy conviction that neither could cover the yawning approaches to the black king. Indeed, the move 20...♘f6 could not shake my optimism. Without particular difficulty I found the variations: 21.♗c3 ♗d7 (21...e4 22.♗c4!; 21...♕e7 22.♘f3!; 21...♘g4 22.♖g6!)



22.♘e6! ♗xe6 23.♖xe6 These variations develop to White’s clear advantage.
But on 20...♖f6 I could not in any way find a decisive continuation.

At first it seemed that 21.♕h5 was good, but after checking I did not like this in view of:

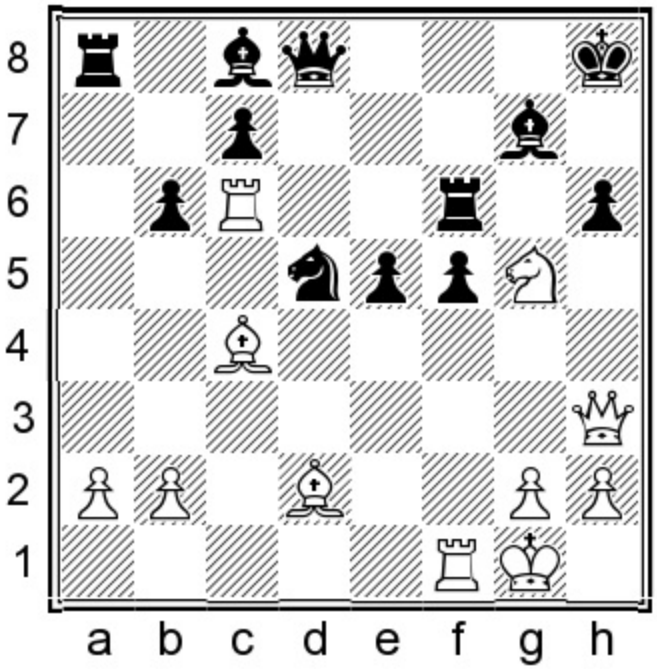
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21...♗d7! 22.♖xf6 ♕xf6 23.♘f7† ♔h7 24.♘xh6 ♗xh6 25.♗xh6 ♕g6!.

Into my mind there flashed the idea 21.♘f7† ♖xf7 22.♗xh6 which, however, immediately found its refutation with 22...♗f6.

Finally, I found the best plan: 21.♗c4!



Indeed, along with the fact that the white rook is effectively invulnerable (21...♖xc6 22.♘f7†), there now threatens simply 22.♖xf6, and there is neither the reply 21...♗d7 on account of 22.♗xd5, nor 21...♗b7 in view of 22.♖xf6 ♕xf6 23.♖xf5. Seemingly, here was the desired solution?

But I was bothered by the reply 21...f4. To everything that came into my mind, alas, an objection

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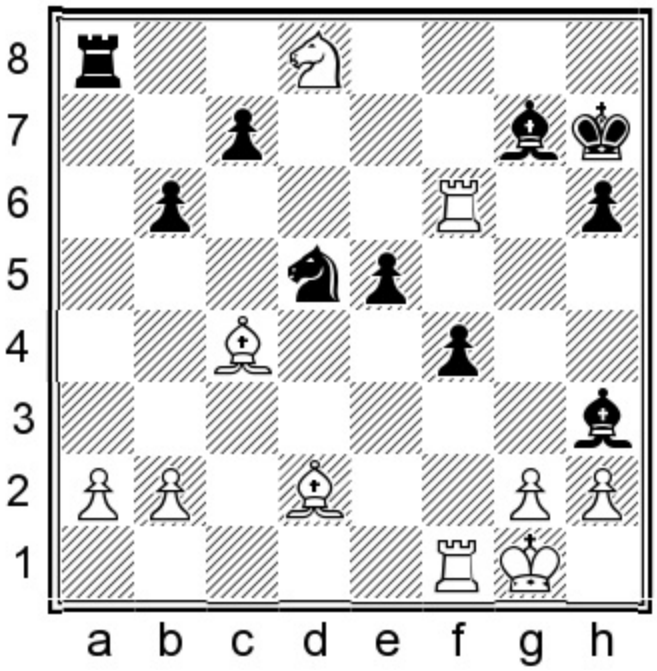
was found. On 22.♕h5 possible was 22...♗b7 23.♗xd5 (or 23.♖xf6 ♕xf6) 23...♕xd5; on 22.♕h4 then 22...♗b7 23.♘e6 ♕d7; on 22.♕d3 then 22...hxg5 23.♖xf6 ♗xf6; and, finally, on 22.♕f3!? then 22...♗b7! 23.♖xf6 (23.♘e6 ♕d7! 24.♗xd5 ♖xe6!) 23...♘xf6! 24.♘f7† ♔h7 25.♕xb7 (25.♗d3† ♔g8!) 25...♕xd2 26.♕xa8 ♕d4† 27.♔h1 ♕xc4. In all variations, Fischer 'came out of the water dry'.

This was astounding! All of my understanding of chess, all of my experience and feeling for the game convinced me of the fact that the position should have been won, but no concrete path to victory could be found. Disillusioned with the 20.♕h3! move, I began to look at other ideas – 20.♖d1, 20.♗c4, but also in vain. And then, I confess, a state of helplessness and despair swept over me – "What is he, this Fischer – invulnerable, or somehow bewitched?" I once again returned to the manoeuvre 20.♕h3, once again went through dozens of variations and was once again unsuccessful. And the time passed – *zeitnot* was approaching. According to the arbiter, I thought over this position for 72 minutes! It could be that in the entire half-century of my career, I had never spent so much time on a single move!

And I simply collapsed psychologically. My energy dried up, apathy set in, nothing made sense anymore, and I made the first move that came into my head, which, of course, was a losing one...

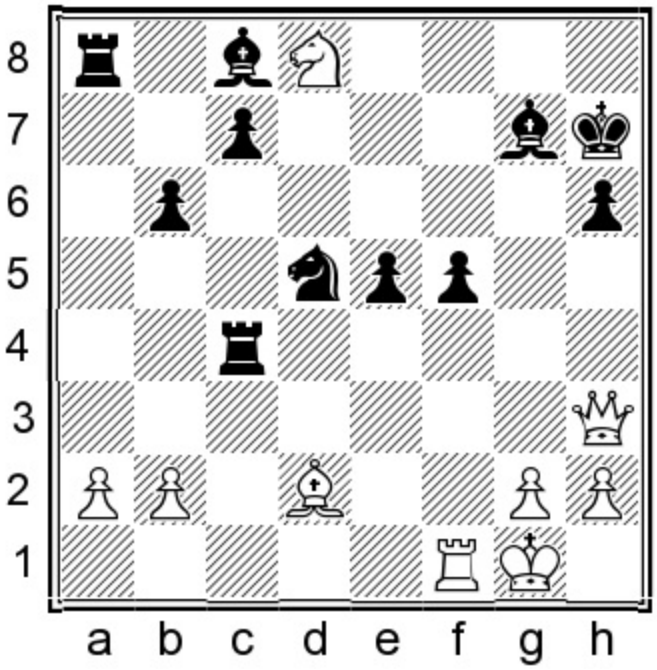
Where then is the truth? Is such a critical position really safe for Black, and with such backwardness in development, can it really be held? Of course not! Chess has its internal logic and when one of the sides has an undoubted positional advantage, it should bear fruit. The whole question lies in finding the solution – which in the present case was camouflaged in a mass of tempting possibilities. At the time I was unable to do so at the board. But time passed, passions died down and objective analyses gave their results. It transpired that having gone through the numerous branches, in the variation 20.♕h3 ♖f6 21.♗c4 f4 I probably wanted too much and lost my objectivity (excessive optimism sometimes leads to an over-assessment of one's chances!), and let slip from my view a continuation which, although not leading to the sought-after forced win, all the same guaranteed a clearly better endgame. In short, after the essential introduction 20.♕h3 ♖f6 21.♗c4 f4 it was necessary to play: 22.♖xf6! ♗xh3 (on 22...♕xf6 decisive is 23.♕d3 ♕xg5 24.♕xd5; while after 22...♘xf6 23.♘f7† play proceeds along the lines of the main variation) 23.♘f7† ♔h7 24.♘xd8

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24...♘xf6 (or 24...♗xf6 25.♘c6 ♗e6 26.♖e1; while on 24...♖xd8 possible is 25.♖c6 ♗d7 26.♗d3† ♔h8 27.♖c2) 25.♘c6 ♗f5 (if 25...♘e4, then 26.♗d3 ♗f5 27.♗c3!) 26.♘xe5 And here there was every basis for counting on success.

With a sigh of relief and belief in the triumph of chess logic, I had drawn a line under this analysis, until recently a student of mine came to one of my classes – the 13-year-old Seryozha Klimov (remember this name – the lad is very talented!) and... tried to contest my conclusions in their final form. He had been given the task of independently assessing the critical position and after a fortnight's research at home he found a completely unexpected resource for Black. On 20.♕h3 ♖f6 21.♗c4, Seryozha suggested the paradoxical continuation 21...♖xc6!? 22.♘f7† ♔h7 23.♘xd8 ♖xc4.

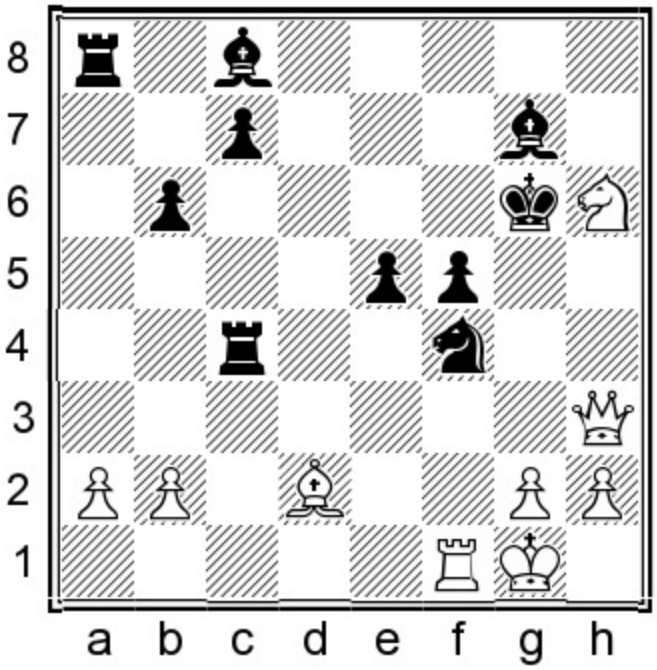


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Black has a slight material deficit, but his pieces are fairly active, while the white knight on d8

finds itself in danger. And indeed, in the case of the natural 24.♘f7 ♔g6! one gains the impression that White should be satisfied by a draw with 25.♘h8† ♔h7 26.♘f7, since after 25.♘xh6 ♘f4 26.♗xf4 exf4 the initiative passes to Black.

I confess, I did not at all wish to reconcile myself to such a turn of events and I once again had to get down to hard analysis. A stimulus to the solution of the problem was given by the 'hanging' position of the opponent's pieces. Indeed, from the position in the last diagram, after the forced introductory moves – 24.♘f7 ♔g6 25.♘xh6 ♘f4! (and there is probably nothing better for either side), one is struck by the disharmony not only in White's camp (the queen and knight are under attack), but also in that of the enemy – the position of the black king, as well as the rooks on c4 and a8, is unsafe, while the c8-bishop is undeveloped. How can this be exploited?



The desired chance is given by the blow 26.♕f3!. The attack on the rook permits a tempo to be won for highly promising tactical operations. Despite the abundance of replies, Black is evidently unable to effectively solve his problems. For instance:

a) 26...♖e4 27.♗xf4 exf4 28.♘xf5! ♗xf5 29.g4!

b) 26...♖xa2 27.♗xf4 exf4 (27...♖xf4 28.♕c6† ♔h7 29.♘f7) 28.♕d5 ♗a6 29.♕e6†

c) 26...♖a7 27.♗xf4 exf4 28.♕d5 ♖c5 (28...♖d4 29.♕c6† ♖d6 30.♕e8† ♔xh6 31.♕xc8) 29.♕g8 ♗a6 30.♕e6† ♔h7 31.♘f7

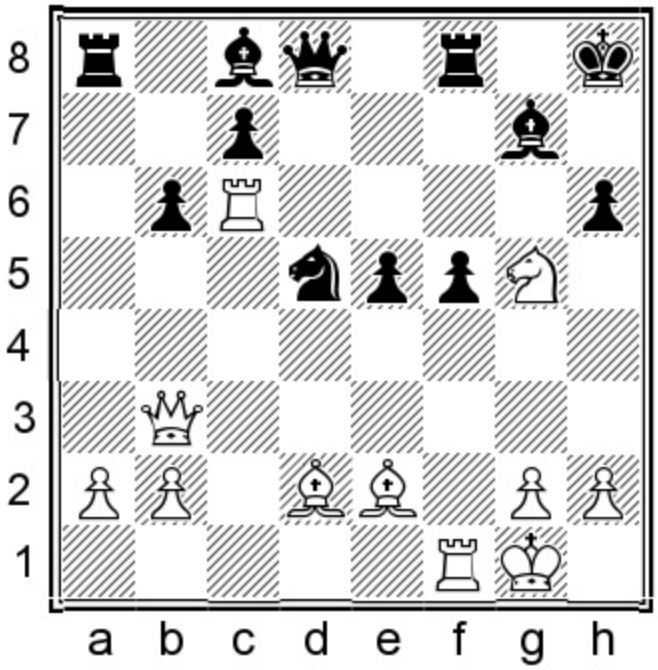
d) 26...♖b8 27.♗xf4 exf4 28.♕d5 ♖c5 29.♕f7† ♔xh6 30.♖xf4

In all cases White retains an advantage. Perhaps the position also conceals other secrets, but, I admit, after all of the endless analysis it seems 'idiosyncratic' to me. And therefore I pass the entire analysis to the judgement of the inquisitive reader...

But we return to the critical position arising after the 19th move. Alas, I did not play 20.♕h3! and all of the attractive and complicated variations of this unusually complex position remained only a subtext, having neither been found in full nor published by any of the numerous commentators. And

the entire game remained an unsolved puzzle for more than twenty years.

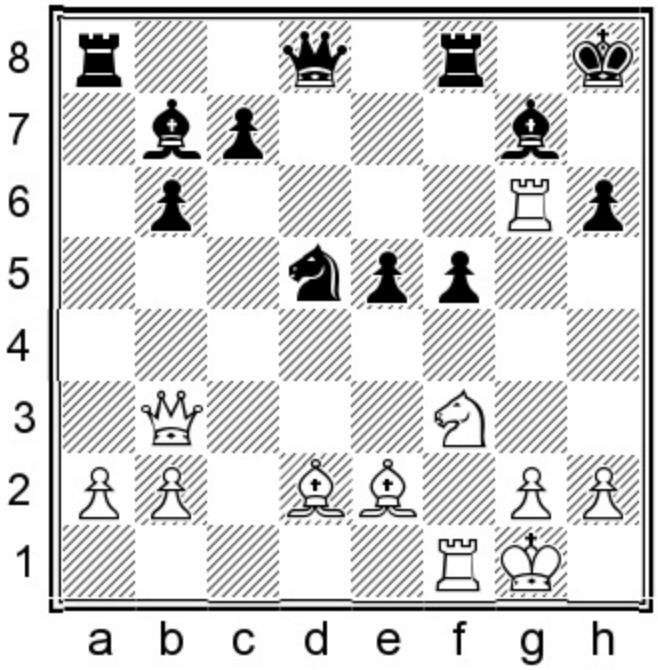
But what actually happened is, as they say, another story.



20.♘f3?

Capitulation...

20...♗b7 21.♖g6



21...♘f4!

A magnificent idea. Exchanging the opponent’s dark-squared bishop, Fischer dispels any illusions that may have remained for White.

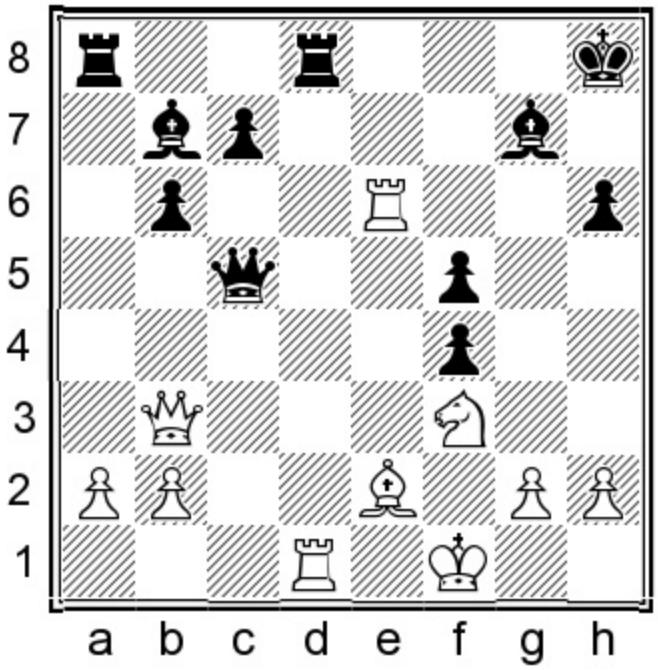
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22.♗xf4 exf4

At the cost of a worsening of his pawn structure in the centre Fischer has opened the game, after which his bishops take on irresistible power. This is yet another example of his favourite method of the transformation of one form of advantage to another.

23.♖d1 ♕e7 24.♖e6 ♕c5† 25.♔f1 ♖fd8

Fischer is in his element. Having seized the initiative, with irrepressible energy he develops the offensive over the whole board. First and foremost, 26...♗d5 is threatened.

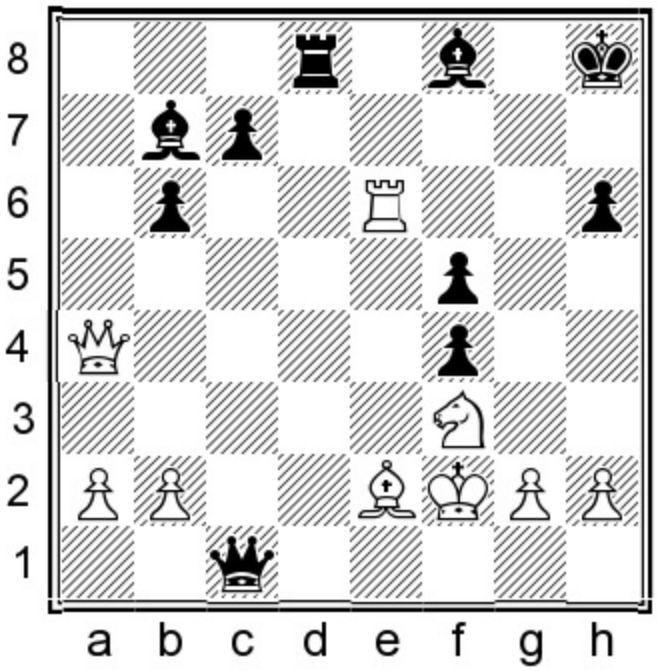


26.♖xd8† ♖xd8 27.♕a4

The hope of simplifying the defence with an eventual exchange of rooks proves to be in vain, but already here ‘good advice is at a premium’.

27...♕c1† 28.♔f2 ♗f8!

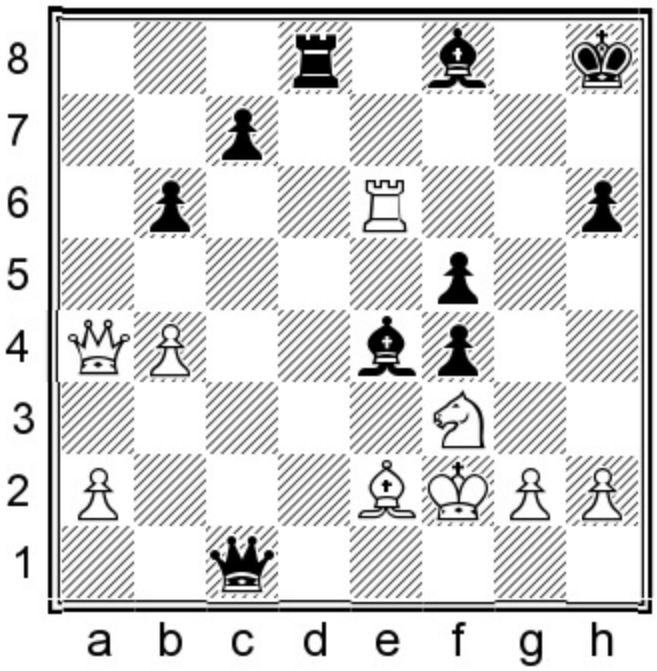
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A universal manoeuvre – it prevents simplification (29.♖e8?? ♗c6) and creates the terrible threat of 29...♗c5†.

29.b4 ♗e4!

Black's attack develops of its own accord, and moreover, in surprising fashion his doubled pawns both secure important outposts for his pieces.



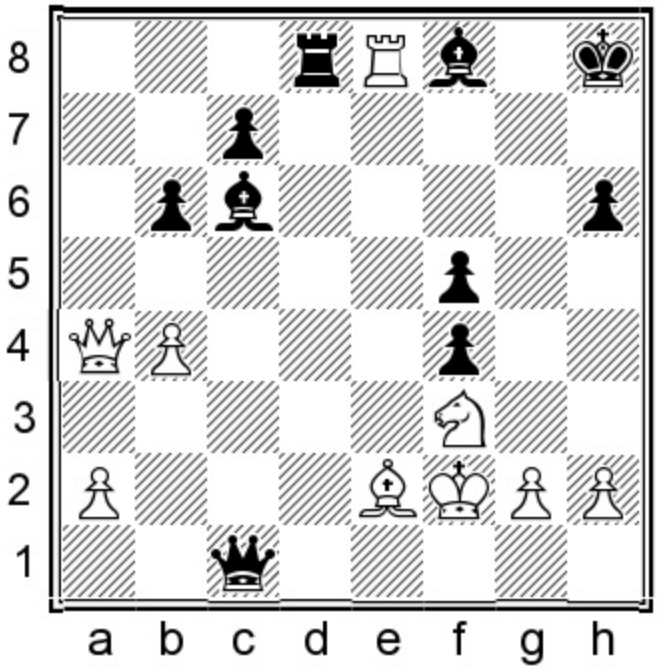
30.♖e8?

Evidence of confusion and a sense of doom.

At any rate, more tenacious would have been 30.♕b5, so as in the case of 30...♕e3† 31.♔f1! ♖d1† to

defend with 32.♘e1. Alas, by this time I was no longer in control of my nerves...

30...♗c6



31.♕xc6

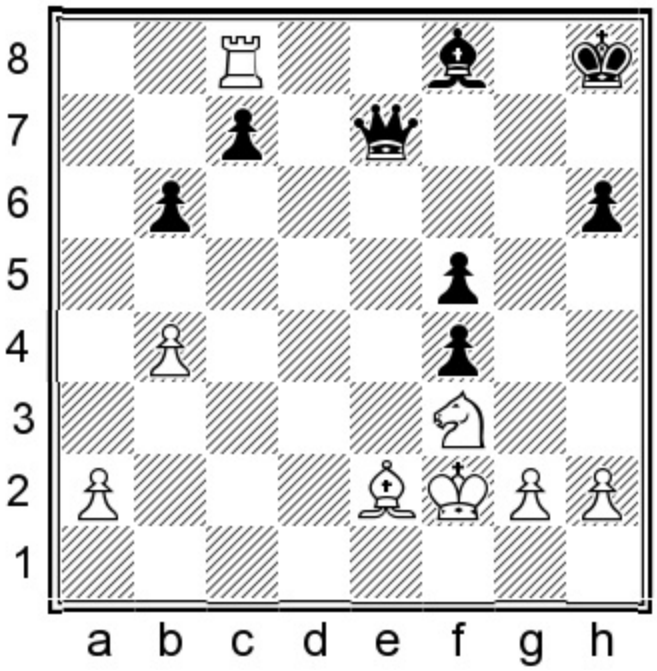
Nothing is changed by 31.♖xd8 ♗xa4 32.♖xf8† ♔g7.

31...♕xc6 32.♖xd8 ♕f6

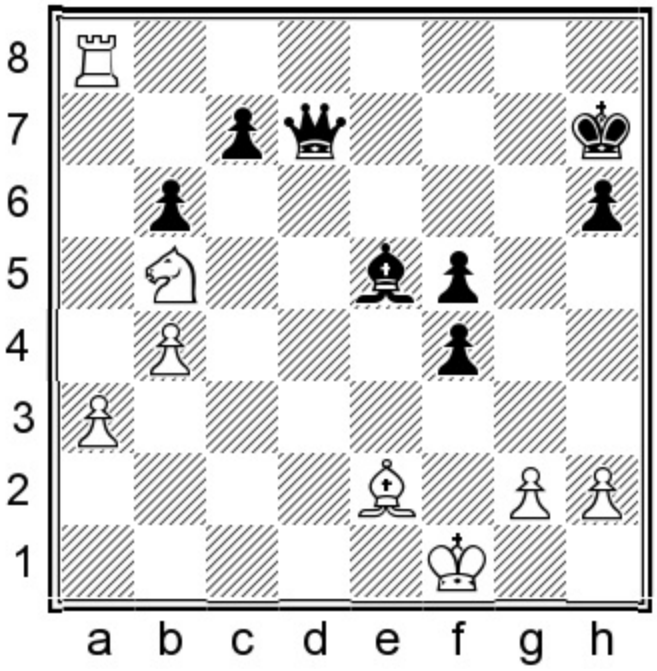
The remainder is simple and clear without commentary.

33.♖c8 ♕e7

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34.♔f1 ♔h7 35.♘d4 ♗g7 36.♘b5 ♗e5 37.a3 ♕d7 38.♖a8



38...f3! 39.gxf3 ♗xh2 40.♔g2 ♕g7† 41.♔xh2 ♕e5†

In this position the game was adjourned and, of course, I resigned it without resuming play.

0–1

This was perhaps the most bitter game of my life. I felt it acutely at the time and it tormented me over the course of many years...

On the following day the situation was exacerbated by a gross blunder, incredible in the chess sense, but predetermined by my condition, in the adjourned 2nd game of the match, in which the draw was absolutely obvious. The struggle in the match had only just flared up, but was essentially over... I

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was broken, in pain and was taken to the hospital with high blood pressure. The match was interrupted for three days.

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GAME 4

Although the terms of the match gave us the right to play ten games, already after the third it had in practical terms become clear that the result of the battle was determined. And the matter was not even that the score at this point had become 3–0. Much more important was the psychological state of the opponents. Fischer, who in all three of the games played had received gifts of fate, and who by his own admission had scored at least 1½ points more than could have been expected, based on the course of the games, was experiencing a burst of strength and optimism. I, on the other hand, after all of the shocks of the start, had fallen into depression. I felt only apathy and a sense of doom. With such a balance of power and Fischer's condition, it would already not cost him any particular effort to build on his success, the more so since, as is well known – "Fischer plays better, the better he plays."

M. Tal later wrote: "Fischer had slipped through the 'danger zone'. Something similar had also happened to him before. Recall Palma de Mallorca. There, during the Interzonal tournament, Fischer had also 'faltered'. Some parts of the competition he conducted in uneven fashion, but after obtaining from Geller the same sort of gift as from Taimanov, he began to play with frightening verve!"

The following game became the best creative achievement of the outstanding grandmaster in our match.

Robert James Fischer – Mark Taimanov

Candidates quarter-final (4), Vancouver 1971

Sicilian Defence

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1.e4 c5

Although the result of the opening dispute in the 2nd game was disappointing for me, for the time being there was no point in parting company with my beloved Sicilian, since in this domain I could still manoeuvre within a broad spectrum of variations.

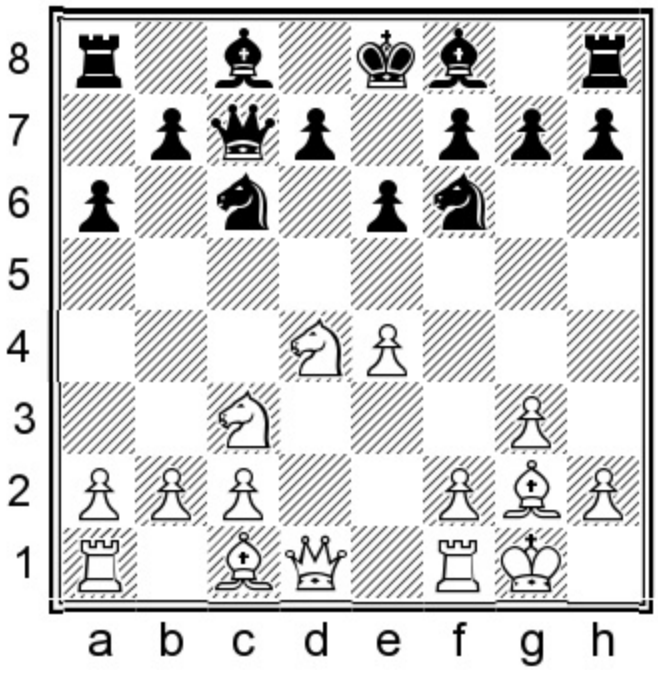
2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♕c7

Naturally, I was not renouncing once and for all my 'trademark' 4...e6, and had not lost faith in it, but in the light of the negative experience of the preceding Black encounter, a pause for home refinement of it was demanded.

5.♘c3

Objectively speaking, according to theory the best reply to the early development of the queen is 5.c4, but it involves the sacrifice of a pawn after 5...♕e5 6.♘f3 ♕xe4† 7.♗e2 d6 8.♘c3 ♕f5 9.0-0, as well as after 5...♘f6 6.♘c3 ♘xe4 7.♘xe4 ♕e5 8.♘b5 ♕xe4† 9.♗e2 ♕e5 10.f4 ♕b8 11.0-0. In both cases White probably has sufficient compensation for the insignificant material loss, but the play takes on a highly unclear character, which is not to Fischer's liking, and I did not doubt that he would prefer a classical path and choose his favourite plan with the flank development of the light-squared bishop. And so it happened.

5...e6 6.g3 a6 7.♗g2 ♘f6 8.0-0



8...♘xd4

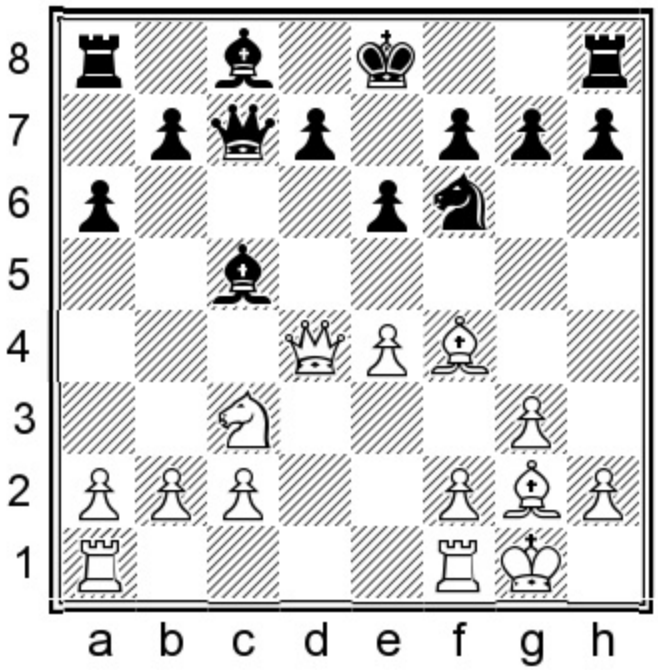
This 'discharging' plan had been in my arsenal for a long time already – positionally it is fully justified, but it needs to be carried out very carefully. In particular, as subsequent practice showed, it is more favourably implemented with the inclusion of the moves 8...♗e7 and 9.♖e1, since after

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9...♘xd4 10.♕xd4 ♗c5 the weakening of the f2-square can tell, and Black carries out the programmed manoeuvre ...♘f6-g4-e5 with gain of tempo.

9.♕xd4 ♗c5 10.♗f4!

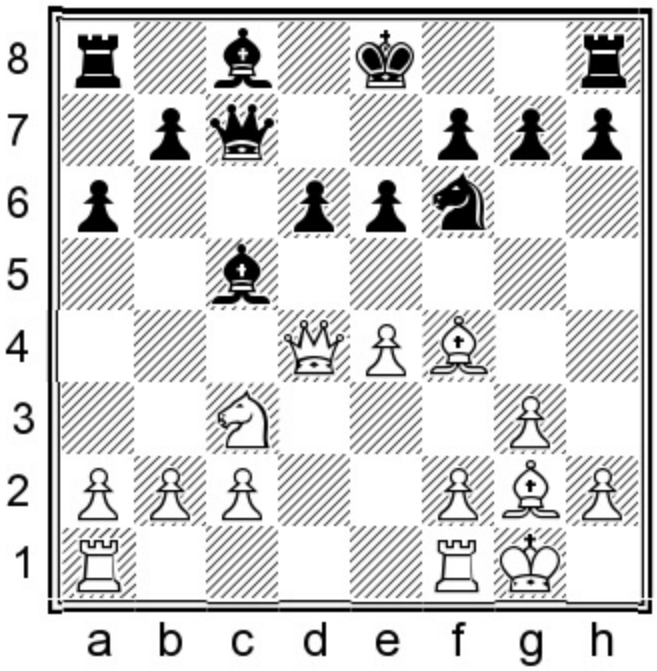
Fischer is infallible in his preferred set-ups – the move played by him is the most unpleasant for Black.



10...d6

Ten years previously in the tournament in Budapest I tried 10...♗xd4 11.♗xc7 ♗xc3 12.bxc3 d5 against Bronstein, and after 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♗e5 f6 15.♗d4 steered the game to a draw without any difficulty. Later, however, it was established that after 15.c4!? (instead of 15.♗d4) 15...♘b4 16.♗c3 ♘c6 17.♖ab1 White could have obtained strong piece pressure. Fischer, who knew everything, was naturally aware of this too, and therefore a different approach was demanded.

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11.♕d2

Fischer senses the nuances of the position very subtly. Although the retreat of the queen to d3 looks more active, in this case counterplay arises for Black, associated with the transfer of the knight with tempo either to e5 or to c5. For instance, 11.♕d3 ♘d7!? 12.♘a4 e5!? 13.♗d2 b5 14.♘xc5 ♘xc5 15.♕a3 ♗b7, and the opening problems are safely solved. 29

Now, however, on 11...♘d7 there would have followed 12.♖ad1 ♘e5 13.♘a4!.

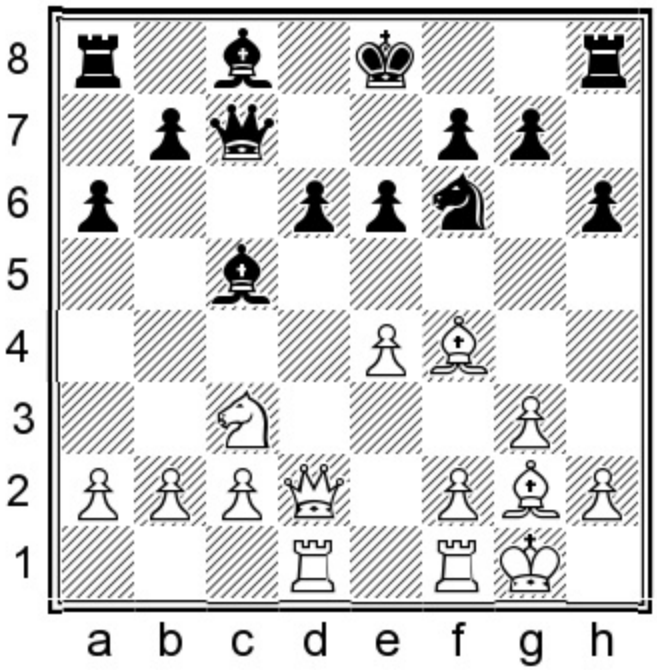
11...h6

A tempo has to be spent on prophylaxis. With the piece arrangement chosen by Black, involving the advance ...e6-e5, it is important not to allow the enemy bishop to g5.

12.♖ad1!?

12.♘a4 promises nothing in view of 12...e5 13.♘xc5 dxc5 14.♗e3 ♘g4. 30

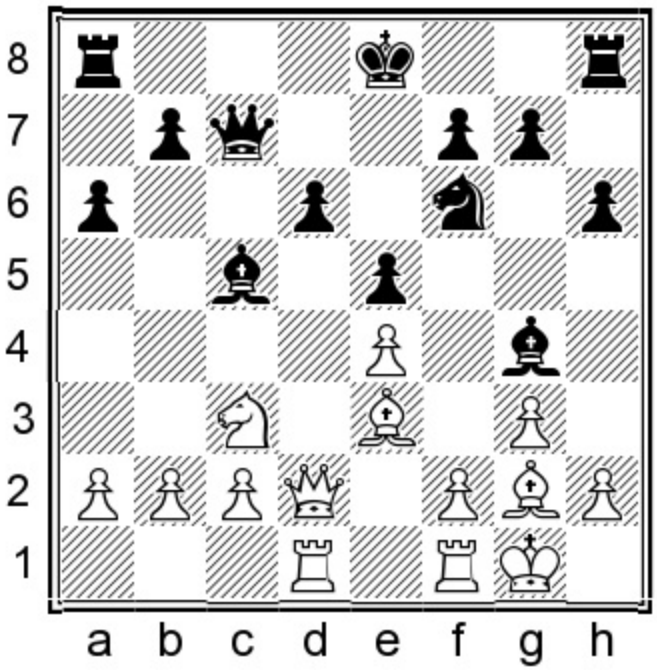
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12...e5 13.♗e3 ♗g4

I recall that it was for precisely this position that my seconds and I had been aiming during preparation. To us it seemed that Black has no particular problems. Clearly, on that score Fischer had a different opinion. And he, alas, proved to be right...

Subsequently, I played 13...♔e7!? (incidentally, 13...♗xe3 will not do on account of 14.fxe3! 31).



14.♗xc5!?

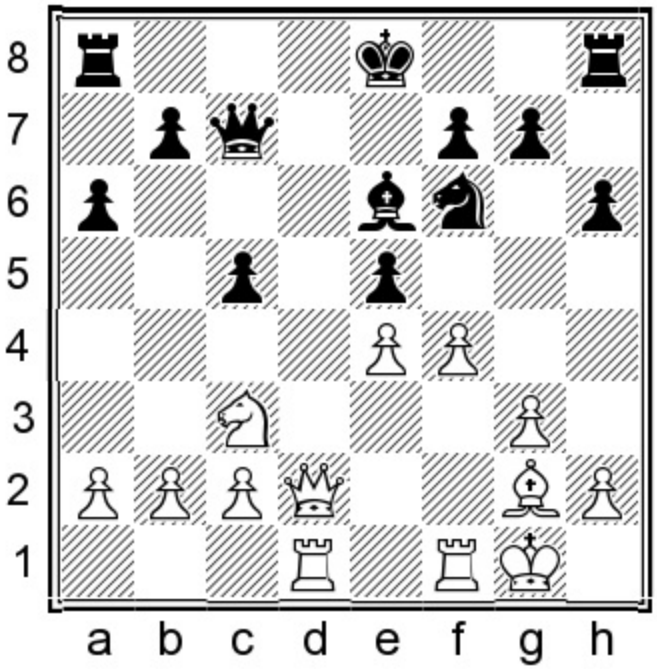
A purely classical treatment of the position. Fischer pins his hopes on the possession of the open file and the outpost on d5. I confess, this was a surprise for me – in analysis we had principally calculated the variations arising after 14.f3 ♗xe3† 15.♕xe3 ♗e6.

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14...dxc5

Clearly, neither 14...♗xd1, in view of 15.♗xd6, nor 14...♕xc5, on account of 15.♕xd6, will do.

15.f3 ♗e6 16.f4!



White has a clear advantage in development and Fischer goes onto the offensive without delay.

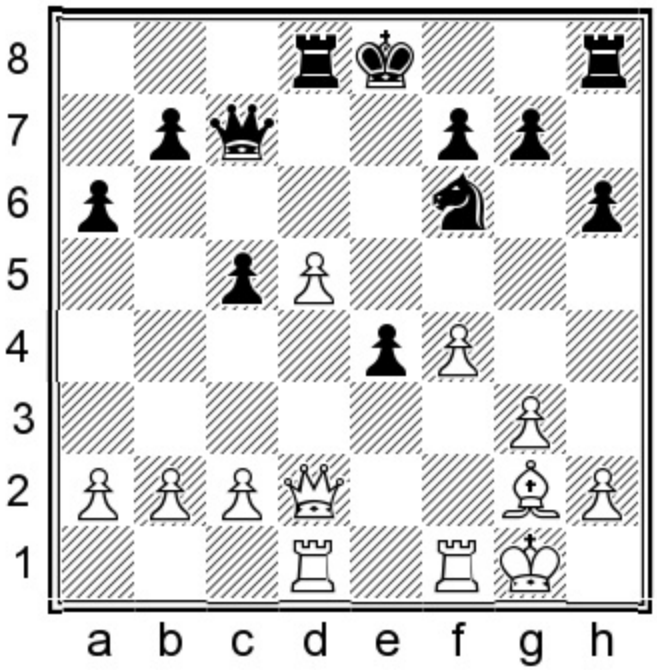
16...♖d8

Of course, 16...0-0 appears more natural, the more so since the continuation 17.f5 is nothing to be feared, but the thrust 17.♕d6!? could be unpleasant for Black.

17.♘d5 ♗xd5 18.exd5 e4

On this tempting advance (bad, of course, is 18...exf4 on account of 19.♖fe1†) I had pinned my hopes of a safe defence. Now neither 19.d6, in view of 19...♕c6, nor 19.c4, in view of 19...0-0 20.♖fe1 ♖fe8, are dangerous for Black. But Fischer all the same finds a possibility that gives the game his desired direction.

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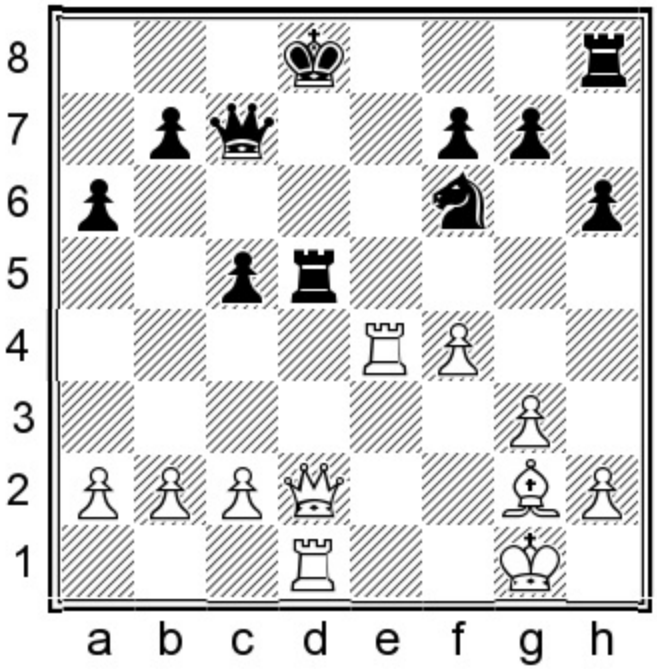
19.♖fe1!

Typical of Fischer. For the sake of the activation of his forces he is ready to go in for significant simplification.

19...♖xd5

There is no choice.

20.♖xe4†! ♔d8



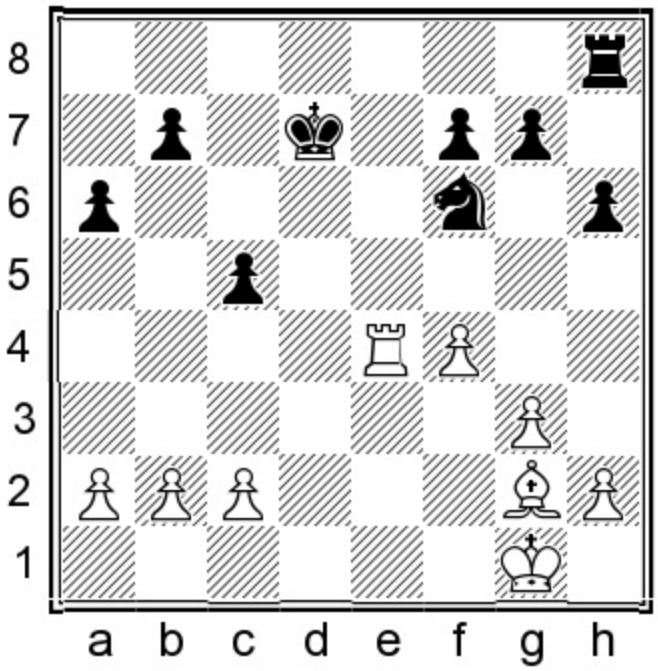
21.♕e2 ♖xd1† 22.♕xd1† ♕d7

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The endgame seemed to me to be the lesser of the evils, since after 22...♔c8 23.♖e5 ♔b8 24.♕f3 White's pieces develop dangerous activity.

23.♕xd7† ♔xd7

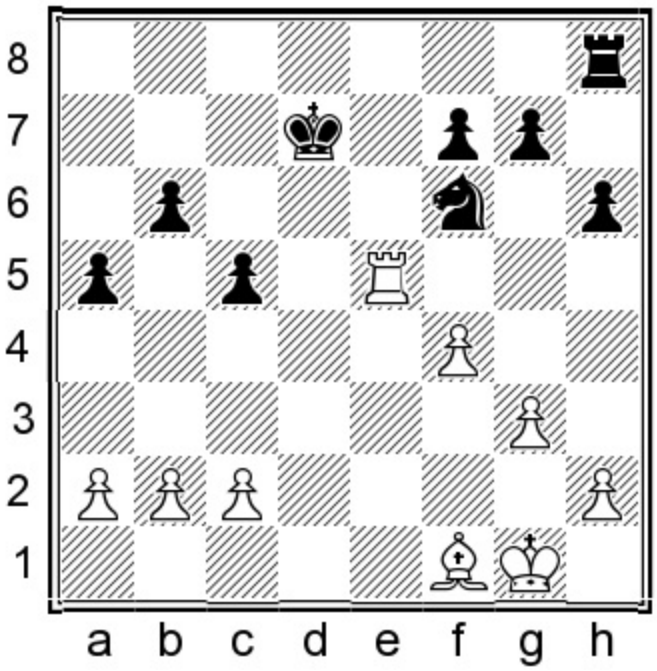
Y. Balashov recommended here 23...♘xd7, which, however, hardly makes a significant change to the character of the position. After 24.♖e1 b6 25.♗f1 a5 26.♗b5 ♖e8 27.♖d1 ♖e7 28.♔f2 Black's problems remain.



Thus, from the opening, essentially bypassing the middlegame, the play has passed into an ending, where the combination of rook and bishop against rook and knight, even with symmetrical pawn structures, determines White's advantage. Perhaps, theoretically it is not very significant and against ideal defence insufficient for victory, but in practice Black's task is very complicated. Especially given the subjective preconditions. Fischer, in situations like this where he had a technical initiative, was simply flawless, while I was by no means in my element in the defensive side's function of patient-passive manoeuvring that is predestined here. In short, in the next stage of the game, conducted in instructive, textbook fashion by Fischer, I felt myself to be in the role of Dr Watson, who had to just play along and admire the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the great Sherlock Holmes, while remaining no more than a modest witness to his successful actions.

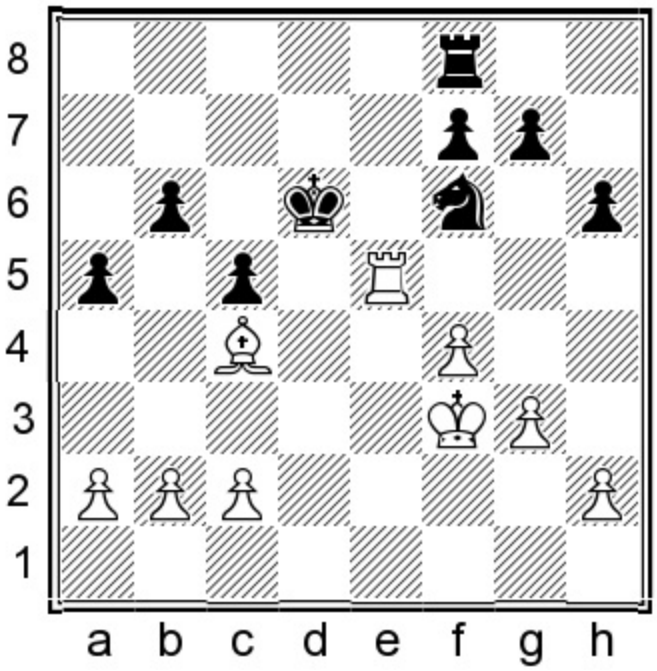
24.♖e5! b6 25.♗f1! a5

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26.♗c4! ♖f8 27.♔g2 ♔d6 28.♔f3

Only a few moves have been played in the endgame, but how much Fischer has managed to do in this time. He has weakened the opponent's pawn structure on the queen's flank, activated his forces, pulled his king up to the centre, and in addition doomed the black rook to the passive defence of the f7-pawn! The following phase of his plan is the transfer of the king to the queen's flank. This he does steadily but unhurriedly.



28...♘d7 29.♖e3 ♘b8

For Black there remains only to wait, while trying to cover the possible squares of invasion in his camp.

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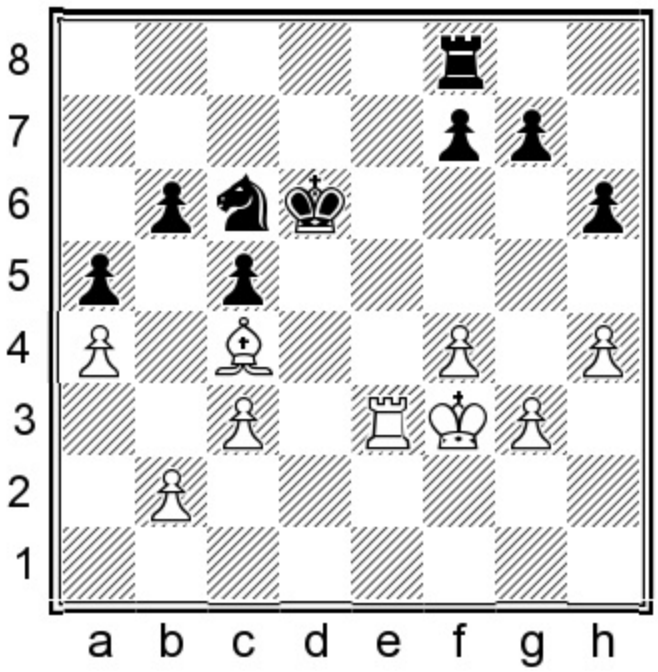
30.♖d3† ♔c7 31.c3 ♘c6 32.♖e3 ♔d6 33.a4!

Opening a ‘golden road’ for the subsequent intended march of the white king to the queen’s flank along the diagonal f1-a6.

33...♘e7

While Black awaits it all...

34.h3 ♘c6 35.h4

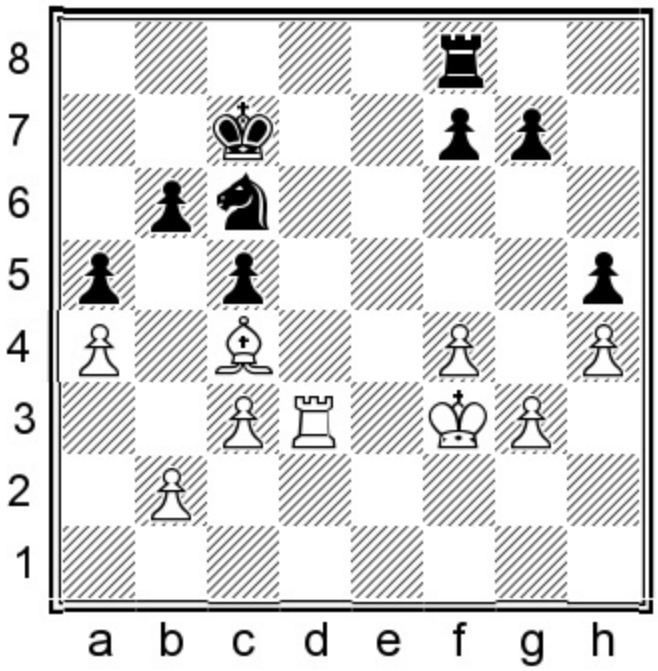


35...h5

It was naturally unpleasant to permit further pressure by means of h4-h5 and g3-g4, but to place a pawn on a light square is at the least incautious. The correct approach in such situations is invariably to endure...

36.♖d3† ♔c7

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37.♖d5!

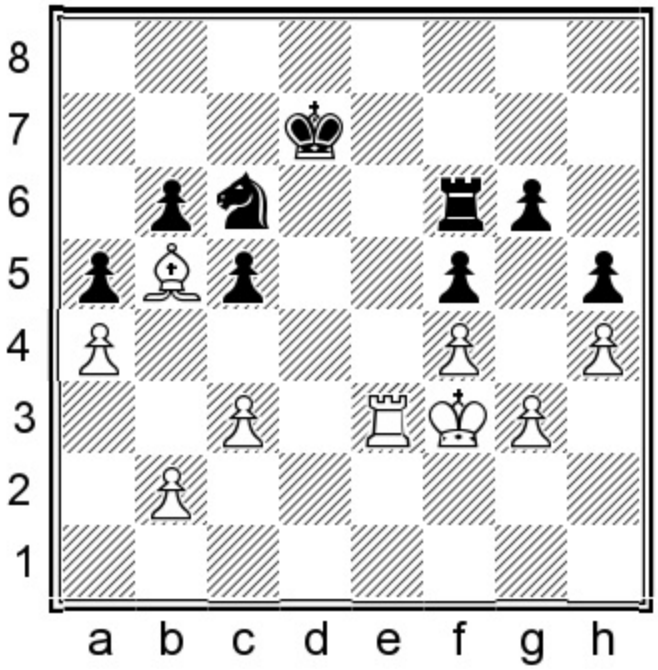
And here is the punishment – yet another pawn is under attack.

37...f5 38.♖d2

“The Moor has done his duty, the Moor can go...” 32

38...♖f6 39.♖e2 ♔d7 40.♖e3 g6 41.♗b5

Here the game was adjourned. Analysis, alas, did not promise any hopes...



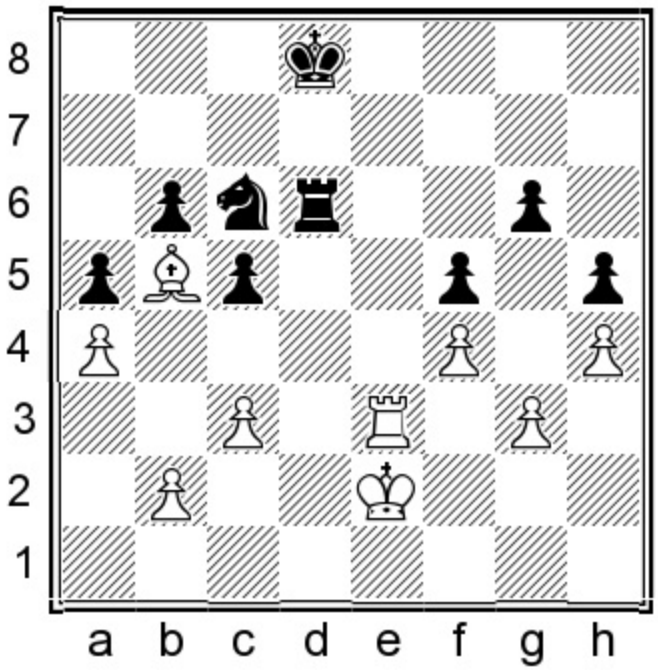
41...♖d6 42.♔e2!

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Although the exchange of rooks comes into White's general programme, he need not hurry with it.

In the case of the immediate 42.♖d3 ♖xd3† 43.♗xd3 ♘d8! 44.♗c4 ♔e7 45.♔e3 ♘b7 Black, transferring the knight to d6, firmly holds the position.

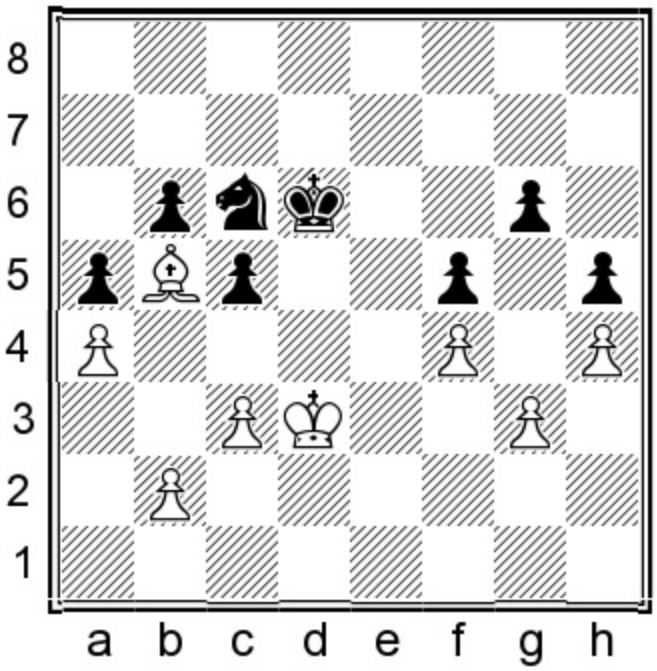
42...♔d8



White's main argument – zugzwang – is coming into force. To fulfil the three defensive tasks standing before Black – not to permit the white king to the queen's flank, nor the white rook into his rear, and finally, to preserve his rook from exchange – is no longer possible. It is necessary to choose the least of the evils – to him it seemed to be the exchange...

43.♖d3! ♔c7 44.♖xd6 ♔xd6 45.♔d3

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This position was destined to be included in all textbooks on the endgame, as a classical example of the superiority of bishop over knight with pawn islands on both flanks. And the plan carried out by Fischer also became a textbook one. It is extremely logical and clear-cut and consists in the following inter-connected phases:

1) The pieces of the stronger side steal up on the vulnerable pawn targets (in the present case the b6- and g6-pawns) and tie down the opponent's forces by the need to defend them.

2) Exploiting his advantage in manoeuvrability, the stronger side creates a zugzwang situation, after which the sacrifice of a piece for two or three pawns becomes possible.

3) Passed pawns are created on both flanks, deciding the fate of the game.

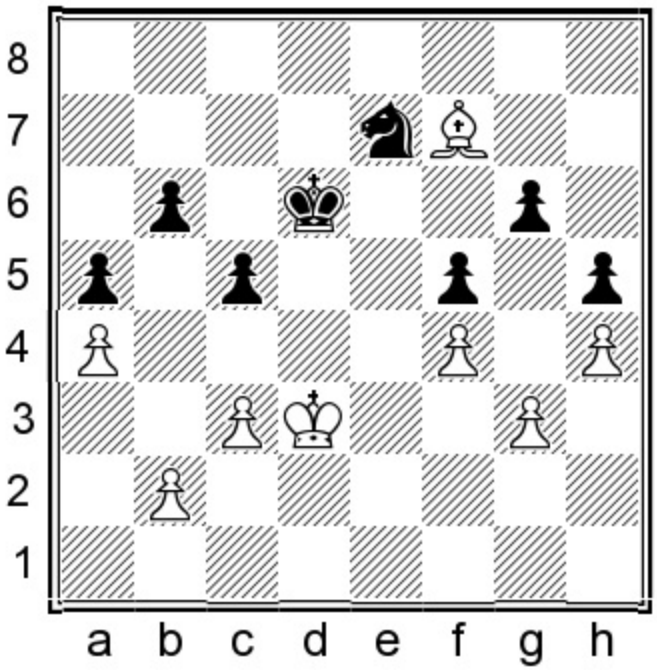
Against this programme there are no adequate defensive resources. There remains only to realize this plan, and Fischer does so impeccably.

45...♘e7

Besides everything else, there was the threat of transposition to a pawn endgame.

46.♗e8 ♔d5 47.♗f7† ♔d6

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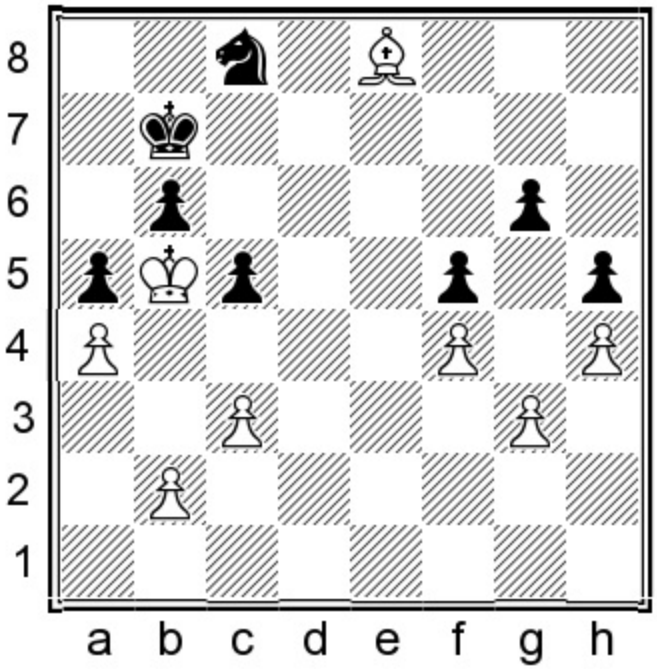


48.♔c4 ♔c6 49.♗e8† ♔b7 50.♔b5

The first goal is achieved, but there is still not complete zugzwang, since Black finds an amusing counter-resource.

50...♘c8!?

'Only' threatening mate on d6.



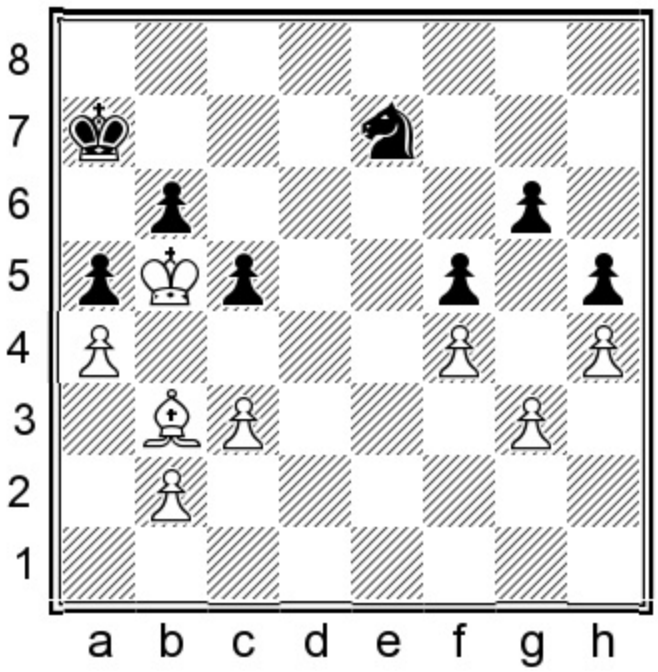
51.♗c6† ♔c7 52.♗d5 ♘e7

In the case of 52...♘d6† 53.♔a6 ♘e4 54.♗f7 ♘xg3 55.♗xg6 ♘e2 56.♗xh5 ♘xf4 57.♗f7 the superiority of the bishop over the knight becomes a decisive factor.

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53.♗f7 ♔b7 54.♗b3! ♔a7

Or 54...♘c8 55.♗d5† ♔c7 56.♔a6.



55.♗d1!

The manoeuvres of the free bishop create a genuinely aesthetic impression. The whole board is subject to it. While the goal, as before, is zugzwang.

55...♔b7 56.♗f3† ♔c7

In the case of 56...♔a7 57.♗g2 the zugzwang is immediate.

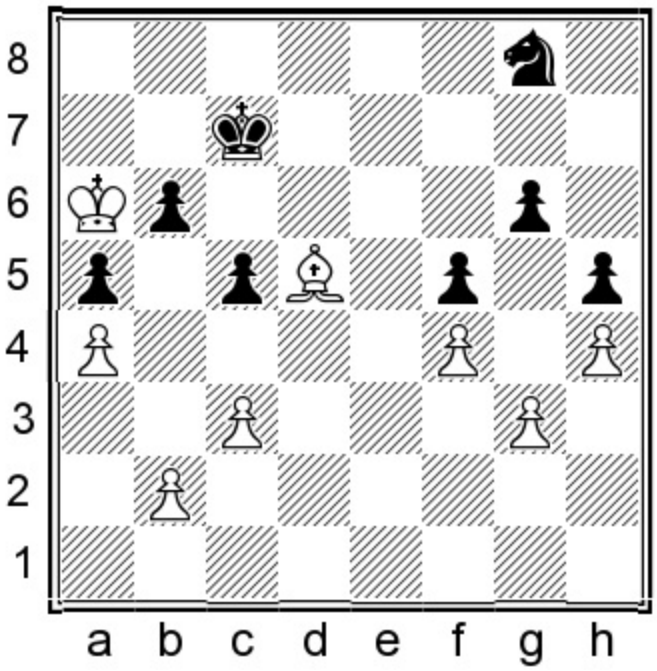
57.♔a6

The vice tightens.

57...♘g8 33

58.♗d5

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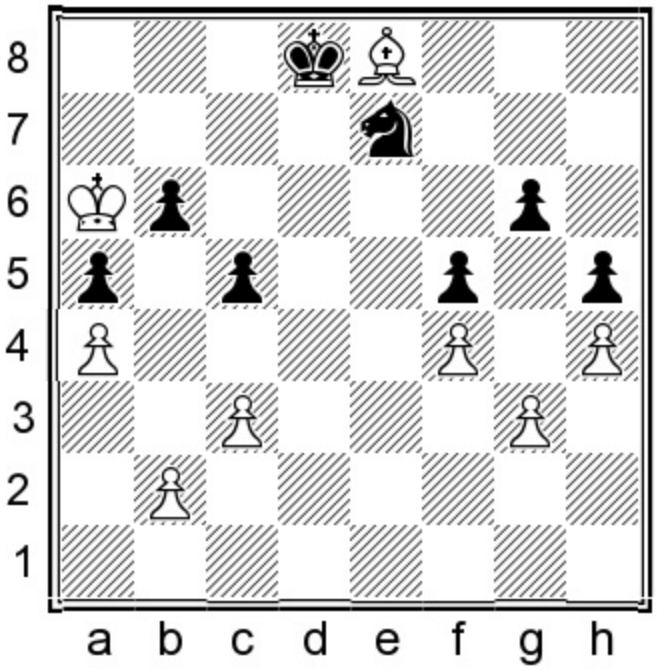
58...♘e7

Nor does the counterplay with 58...♘f6 59.♗f7 ♘e4 help Black. After 60.♗xg6 ♘xg3 61.c4! ♔c6 62.♔a7 ♔c7 63.♗f7 there is once again a ruinous zugzwang.

59.♗c4 ♔c6 60.♗f7 ♔c7 61.♗e8!

The second goal is achieved – zugzwang!

61...♔d8

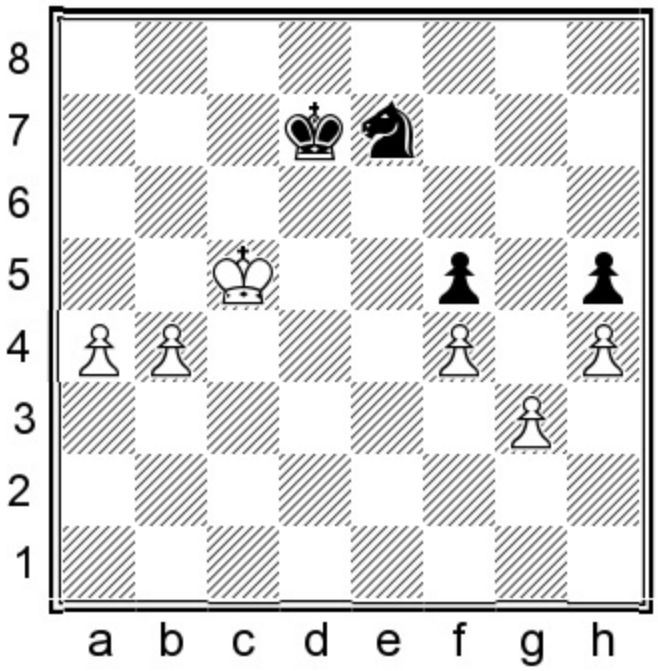


62.♗xg6

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This is the decisive link in the plan. Sacrificing a piece, Fischer collects a large harvest of pawns.

62...♘xg6 63.♔xb6 ♔d7 64.♔xc5 ♘e7 65.b4 axb4 66.cxb4



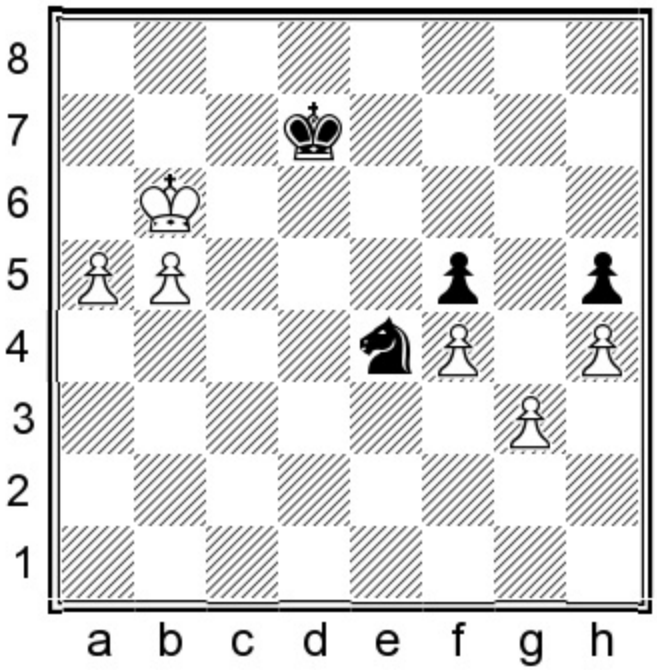
White's passed pawns now either deflect the black pieces and free the path of the white king towards the black f5- and h5-pawns, or with the support of his king, proceed to the cherished 8th rank. Which path of ruin to choose was left to me personally.

66...♘c8

The choice fell on method No. 2, as the quickest.

67.a5 ♘d6 68.b5 ♘e4† 69.♔b6

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69...♔c8 70.♔c6 ♔b8 71.b6

Black resigned. On 71...♘xg3 there follows 72.a6 ♘e4 73.a7† ♔a8 74.b7† ♔xa7 75.♔c7 and the b-pawn promotes to a queen.

1–0

Fischer conducted this game magnificently! Alas, I could do no more than look on... Before the match, Botvinnik had warned: “Fischer cannot be given even a minimal positional advantage with no counterplay for the opponent. Such positions he plays in virtuoso fashion.” I knew this, but in this encounter he imposed his will.

Thus, 0–4. It was all over. Like a recurring nightmare, the positions with missed possibilities and unexplained mistakes would not leave me alone. After all, everything could have been different. And dissatisfied with myself, and by fate, there arose an irresistible desire if not to save the match (fantasy did not carry me this far), then to at least avoid a rout, to win one or two games, so as to demonstrate to myself and others that the course of the struggle had been unfair and that I had not played so badly as it appeared from the crushing score. It was necessary to overcome the self-reproach, to throw everything away and to ‘cling’ to the next game. I had White, and each time this had given me chances of victory. In short, ‘bridges were burned’ and in the 5th game of the match I was in a very belligerent mood. And it developed promisingly at the start...

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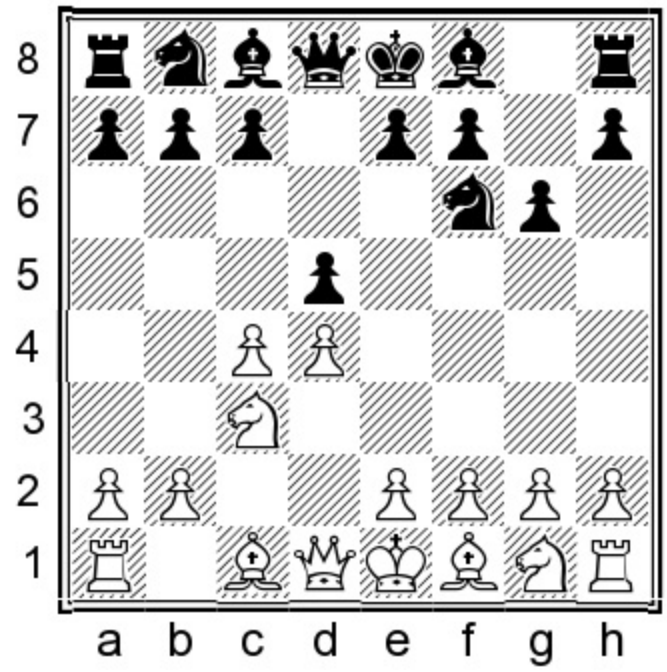
GAME 5

Mark Taimanov – Robert James Fischer

Candidates quarter-final (5), Vancouver 1971

Grünfeld Defence

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 d5



My first, albeit small, psychological victory. Fischer admits his defeat in the theoretical discussion on the problems of his favourite main line in the King's Indian Defence and shifts the debate to the Grünfeld Defence, which he employed much more rarely. I recall that in the programme

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of pre-match preparation this possibility had been envisaged as Fischer's 'first reserve' variation, and therefore did not take me by surprise.

4.♗g5

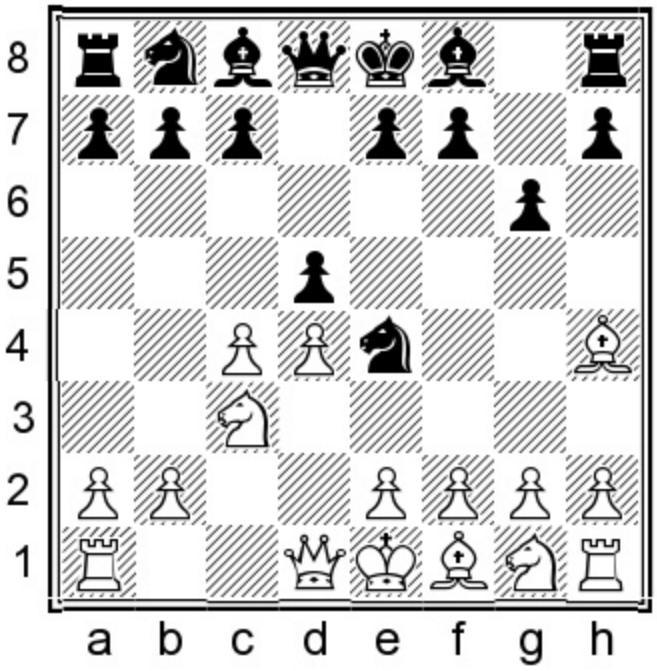
This aim of this insidious 'anti-Grünfeld' move is to deflect Black, by the attack on the d5-square, from the programmed piece-and-pawn pressure on the central squares. It was introduced into tournament practice by A. Alekhine, which in itself denotes a 'mark of quality'. And although in the process of theoretical study its reputation was somewhat shaken and it no longer found quite so many adherents, it was to my taste and it served me as a true and faithful weapon for many years.

4...♘e4

Considered to be the best reply.

5.♗h4

It was precisely this modest retreat, worked out by me in great detail, that brought success in many memorable games 34, and therefore can be considered my 'trademark'.



5...♘xc3

The usual continuations here are 5...c5 or 5...♗g7, but Fischer has his own approach to this variation.

6.bxc3 dxc4

At the very least, a belligerent move! Taking the pawn, the American grandmaster hopes to exploit the time spent by the opponent on regaining it for the harmonious mobilization of his pieces.

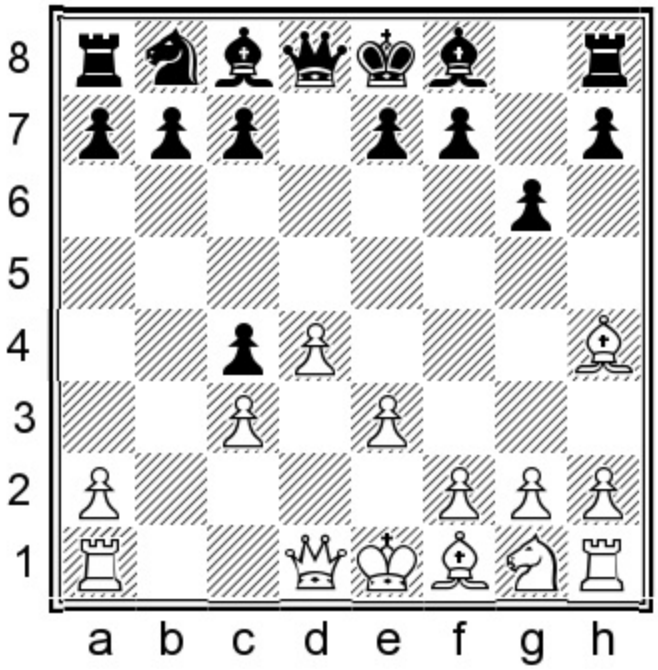
Still possible here was 6...c5 7.cxd5 ♕xd5 or 6...♗g7 7.e3 c5, which theory considers as leading to the

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main, principled, lines.

7.e3

Tempting, of course, is 7.e4, but this is only playing into Black's hands. After 7...♗g7 8.♗xc4 c5 the initiative is on his side, since in the given situation the bishop on h4 proves to be out of play.

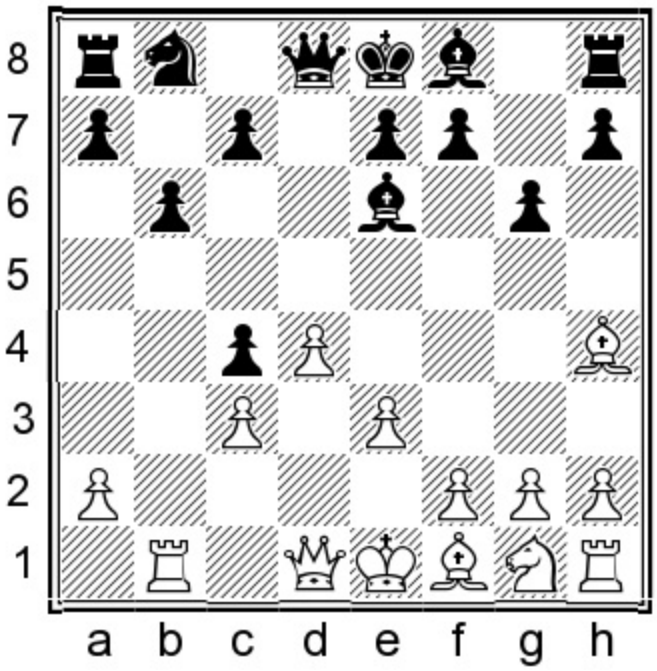


7...♗e6

This is Fischer's patent. Not long before our match he had played this way (and not without success!) against Henrique Mecking in Buenos Aires. My seconds and I had paid a lot of attention to this game...

8.♖b1 b6

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9.♗e2

Home preparation! Mecking had tried 9.♘f3 ♗g7 10.♘d2 0-0 11.♘xc4, but after 11...♗d5 12.♕d2 ♕d7 13.♘a3 c5 he achieved nothing good.

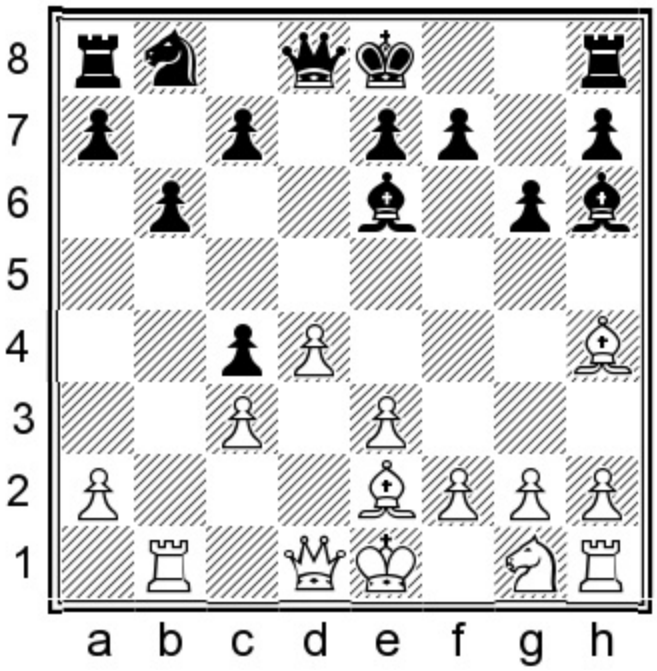
9...♗h6

Fischer had figured out White's idea and tries to take counter-measures.

On the natural 9...♗g7 there could have followed 10.♗f3 c6 11.♘e2 0-0 12.♘f4, which seemed unpleasant to Fischer. And yet, his last move is hardly a successful one – soon the bishop all the same has to return to its rightful place.

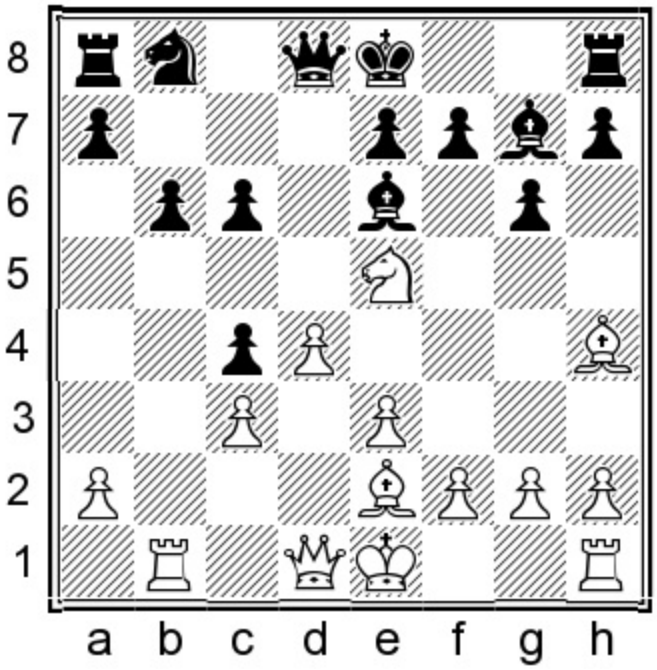
There remains to add that, of course, 9...c5 was bad in view of 10.♗f3 ♗d5 11.♕a4†.

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10.♘f3 c6 11.♘e5 ♗g7

A recognition of the mistake, but 11...b5 was no good on account of 12.♗f3 ♗d5 13.e4 ♗e6 14.d5!.



12.f4

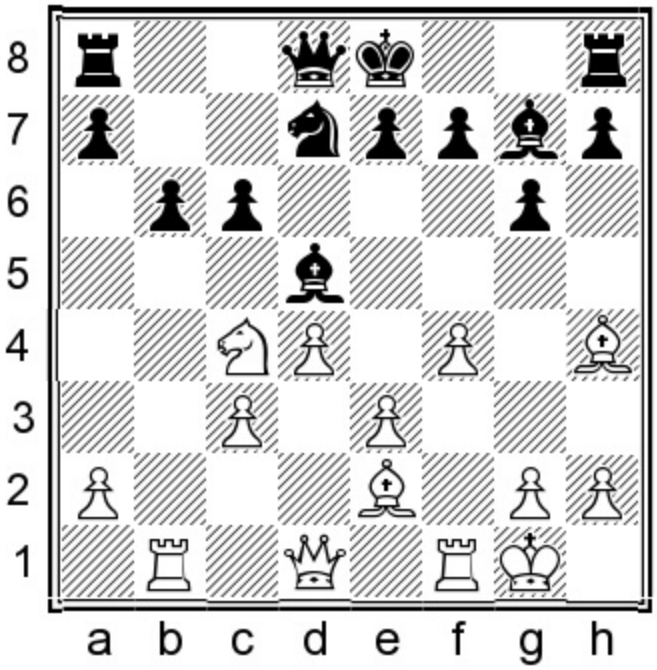
Of course, 12.♘xc4 made no sense in view of 12...b5 and 13...♗xa2.

12...♗d5 13.0-0 ♘d7

To defend the pawn by means of 13...b5 would have been risky in view of 14.♗f3 f5 15.♕e2 followed by 16.e4.

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14.♘xc4

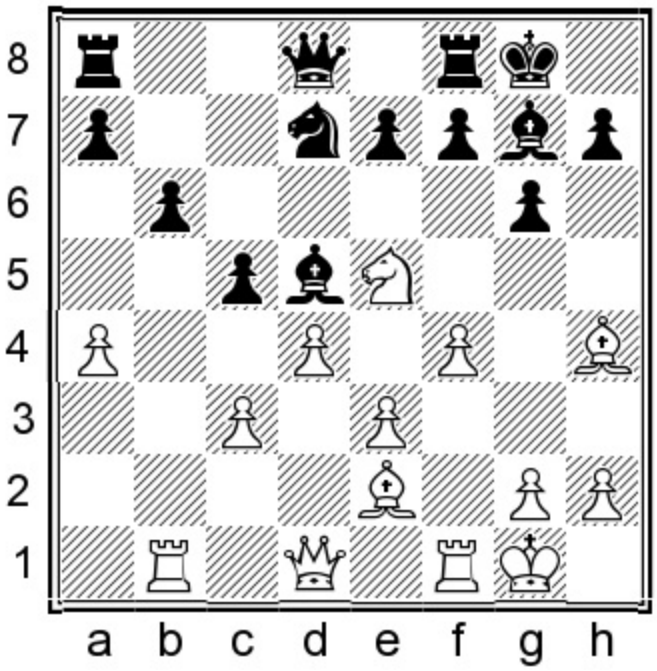


14...0-0

Amongst other things, 15.♘d6† was threatened.

15.a4 c5 16.♘e5

It is time to summarize the results of the opening battle. They are disappointing for Fischer – Black is noticeably behind in development and has ceded space and central control. Clearly, he is faced with a difficult task.



16...♘xe5

Deserving attention was a more restrained method – 16...♘f6, after which the play retains the

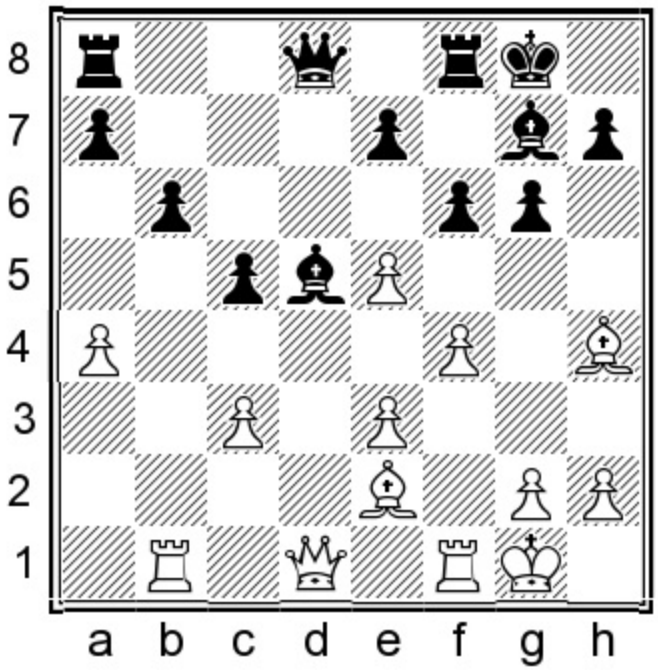
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closed character that is normally suitable for the defence. 35 But Fischer does not tolerate the opponent's active pieces and exchanges them at the first possibility.

17.dxe5!

Judging from everything, this paradoxical idea (according to the established canons one is 'supposed' to take with the f-pawn!) was underestimated by Fischer. The opening of the d-file makes the position of the bishop on d5 unstable and forces Black into significant positional concessions. First of all the threat of 18.♗xe7 must be reckoned with.

17...f6



18.♖b2!

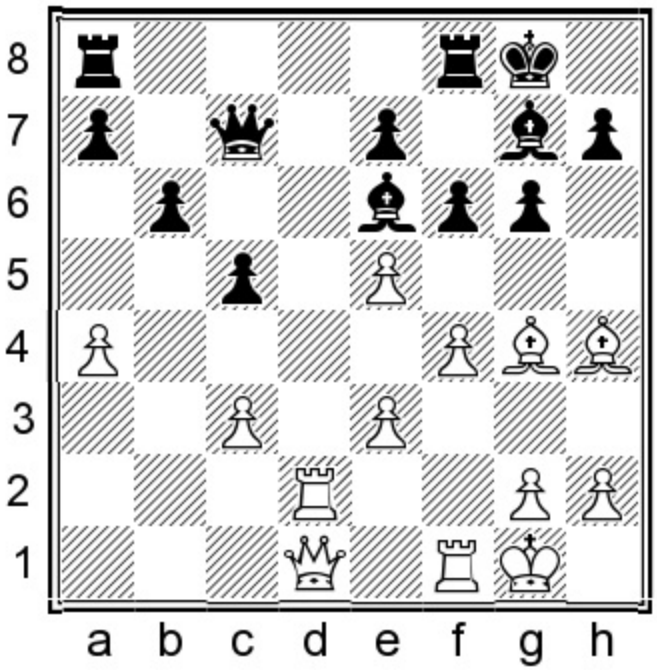
The point of White's idea! The transfer of the rook to d2 permits him to gain a dangerous initiative.

18...♗e6

Of course, not 18...fxe5?? on account of 19.♖d2.

19.♖d2 ♕c7 20.♗g4!

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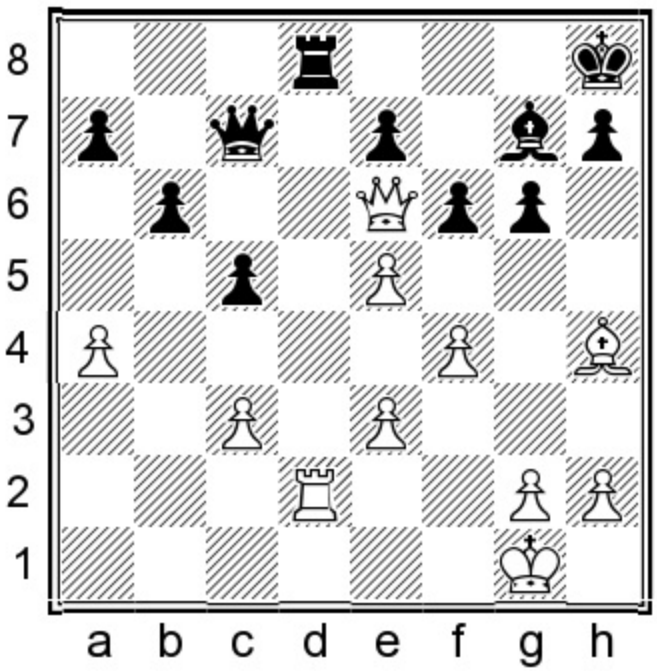


White's pressure is increasing of its own accord. Maximum vigilance is now required from Fischer.

20...♕c8!

The only satisfactory reply.

In the case of: 20...♗xg4 21.♕xg4 ♖ad8 (21...fxe5? 22.♕e6† and 23.♖d7) 22.♖fd1 ♖xd2 23.♕e6† ♔h8 24.♖xd2 ♖d8

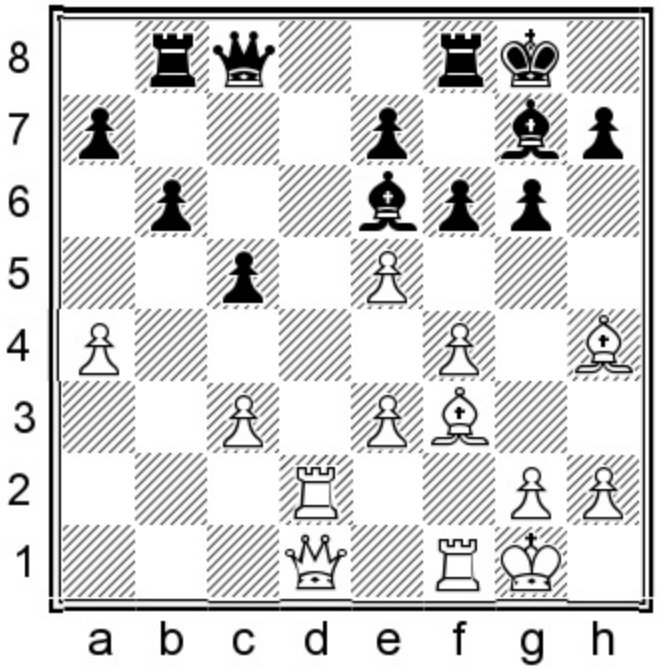


There follows 25.exf6! exf6 (25...♖xd2 26.fxe7!) 26.♗xf6 and Black stands badly.

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Black’s position is strategically bad after 20...f5 21.♗f3 ♖ad8 22.♖ff2.

21.♗f3 ♖b8



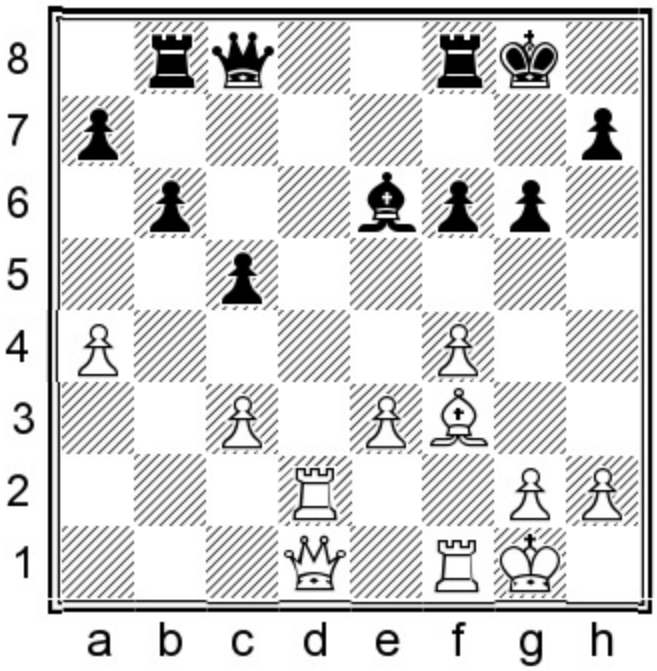
22.♕e2

The critical moment in the struggle, which, however, only became obvious to me many years later... The point is that, as was shown by the subsequent events and the numerous analyses that followed, after the natural queen move (which did not give rise to doubt either in me or in the commentators 36)

White’s initiative imperceptibly but inexorably declines. And although attempts were undertaken on many occasions to improve White’s play at some point, concrete variations were not found. Meanwhile an objective analysis of the position, in which the activity of the white pieces should play an important role, logically suggests the presence of real paths for the realization of the advantage that has been achieved. But where do they lie?

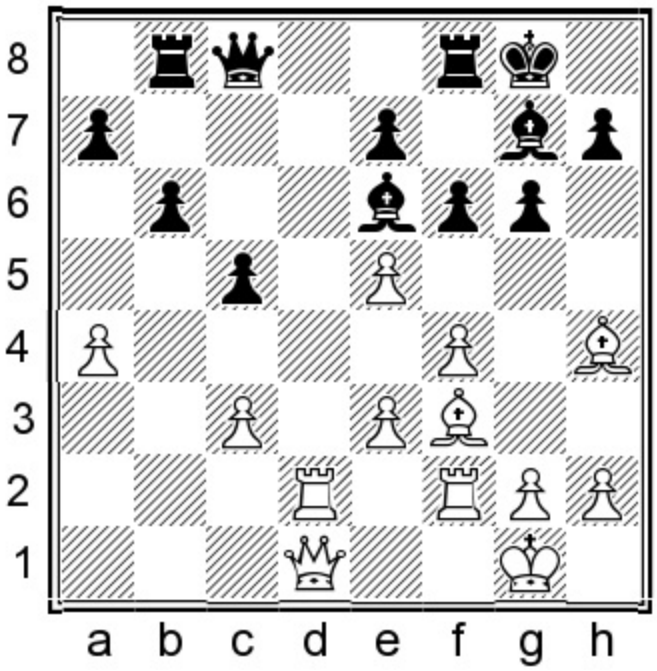
Seemingly, in the position in the diagram good prospects are opened up by the continuation 22.exf6. Indeed, then 22...exf6 will not do in view of 23.♖d6 ♖d8 24.f5! ♗xf5 25.♗g3, while after 22...♗xf6 23.♗xf6 exf6 very strong appears:

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24.♖d6 ♖d8 25.♖f2 ♕c7 26.♖fd2 ♖xd6 27.♖xd6. However, it turns out that just here Black, boldly playing 27...♔f7 with the idea of 28...♔e7!, completely neutralizes the opponent's initiative. But if neither 22.♕e2 nor 22.exf6 promise success, then what is left?

The solution to the problem was the paradoxical, and therefore hidden from attention, move 22.♖ff2!. Its main idea is the preparation of the total seizure of the open d-file with a build-up of the heavy pieces. And indeed, after this manoeuvre it proves to be impossible for Black to organize a defence. Here are some rough variations:

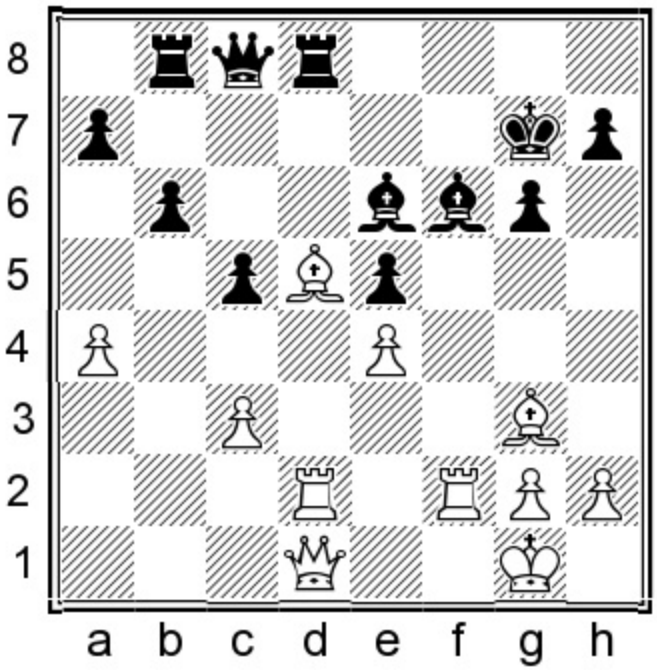


a) 22...fxe5 23.♗xe7 exf4!? (23...♖e8 24.♗d6 exf4 25.♗xf4 ♗xc3 26.♖d3 and White wins) 24.♗xf8 fxe3 25.♗d6 exf2† 26.♖xf2 ♗xc3 27.♗xb8 ♕xb8 28.♗d5! and White has a large advantage.

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b) 22...♕c7 23.exf6 ♗xf6 (23...exf6 24.f5! ♗xf5 25.♗g3) 24.♗g3 and Black's position is very unpleasant.

c) 22...♖d8 23.f5! ♗xf5 24.exf6 ♗xf6 25.♗g3 e5 26.♗d5† ♔g7 27.e4 ♗e6

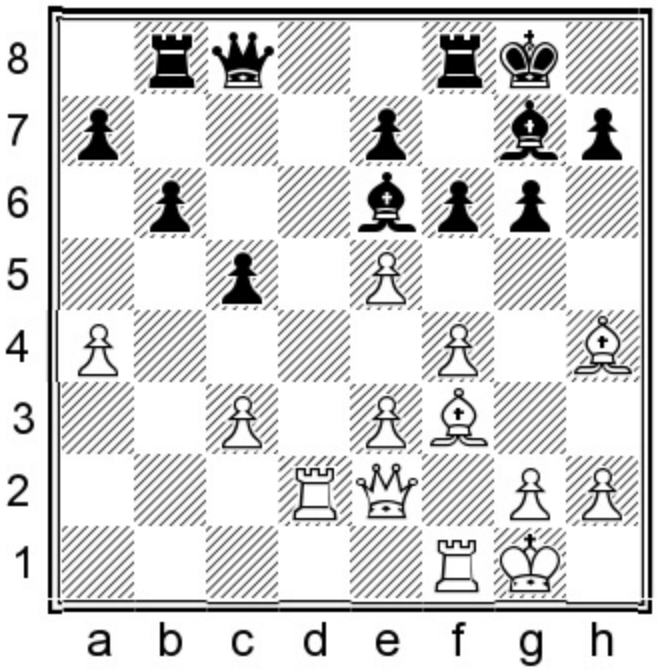


28.♖xf6! ♔xf6 29.♕f3† and White wins.

The logic of chess triumphs, but how hard it is to comprehend its mysteries! And here, incidentally, lay one of the secrets of Fischer's invulnerability: the positional sense and intuition of the American genius insured him against 'desolate' positions in which simple measures were sufficient to break down his defences. He could fall into difficult positions, but almost never ones where there did not remain at least a minimal reserve of durability. And therefore, even if it seemed that it was all over, a good deal of effort was still required for the goal to be achieved. And Fischer's opponents sometimes lost sight of this amazing property, and could not psychologically withstand his incredible resilience in repelling their attacks. I had to drink from this bitter cup of disappointment many times in our match...

But we return to the game, where many interesting developments still lay ahead.

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22...♖d8!?

Exploiting the respite, Fischer first of all strives to exchange the opponent's most active piece.

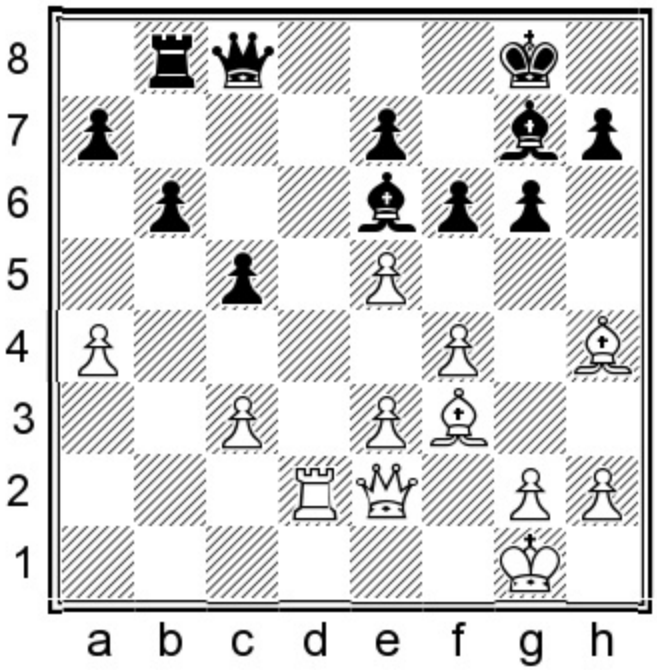
23.♖fd1 ♖xd2

Only thus! On the tempting 23...♕c7, then 24.♗g4! is very unpleasant.

24.♕xd2

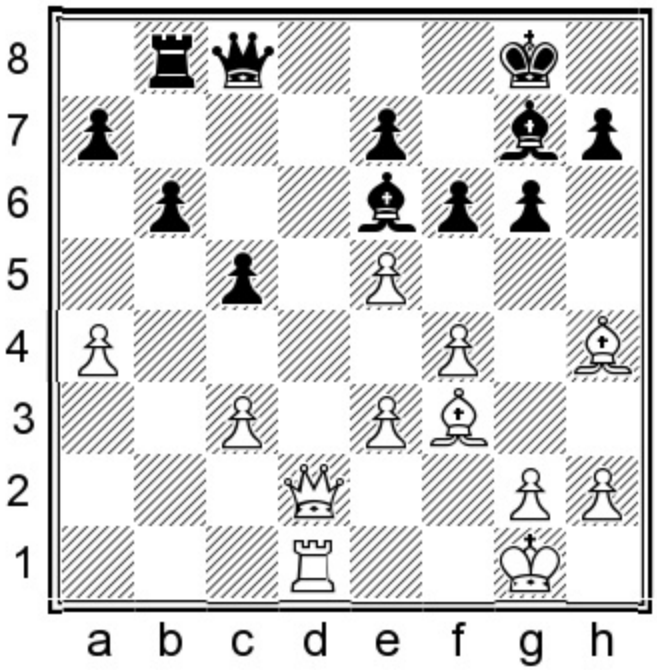
This natural move (White at least possesses the d-file) was criticized by the commentators, who considered that it was the reason for the loss of the accumulated positional advantage, while recognizing as correct the capture with the rook, in support of which the following interesting variations after 24.♖xd2 were to serve:

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a) 24...♕e8 25.♕a6! fxe5 26.♕xa7 exf4 27.♗c6! ♕c8 (if 27...fxe3 28.♗xe8 exd2, then 29.♗f7†!) 28.♗xe7 fxe3 29.♖d8† ♕xd8 30.♗xd8 ♖xd8 31.♗f3 with a clear advantage for White (Tal).

b) 24...♕c7 25.exf6 ♗xf6 (25...exf6 is bad in view of 26.f5!) 26.♗g3 with the extremely unpleasant threat of 27.f5. However, it is precisely here that an incorrect assessment is hidden... it turns out that Black has an excellent retort: 26...♖d8! 27.f5 ♖xd2 28.♕xd2 ♕d7! and already it is White who has difficulties!
Thus, the capture on d2 with the rook would have been at any rate no better than with the queen...



24...♕e8

But here this is the best manoeuvre – on 24...♕c7 there would have followed 25.exf6 exf6 26.f5!.

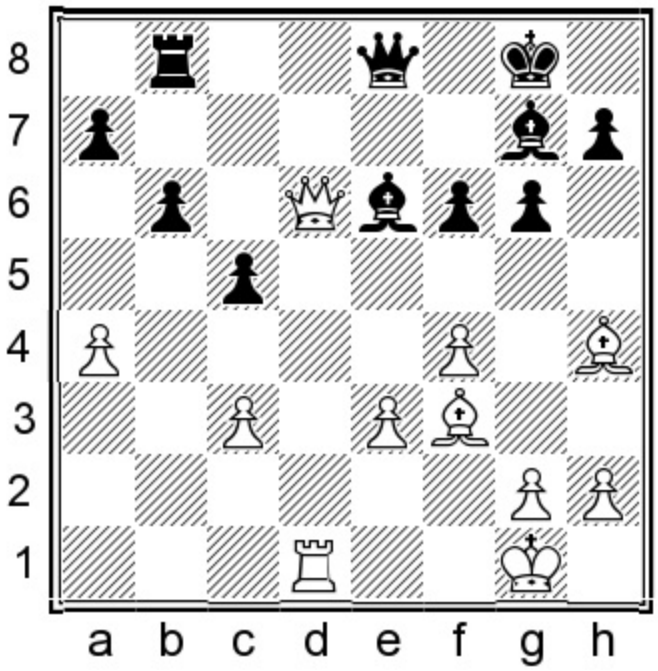
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25.exf6

Nothing is promised by 25.♗d5 in view of 25...♕f7!? 26.♗xe6 ♕xe6 27.♕d7 ♕xd7 28.♖xd7 fxe5 29.fxe5 ♗xe5 30.c4 ♗f6!? 31.♗xf6 exf6 32.♖xa7 ♖e8.

25...exf6 26.♕d6

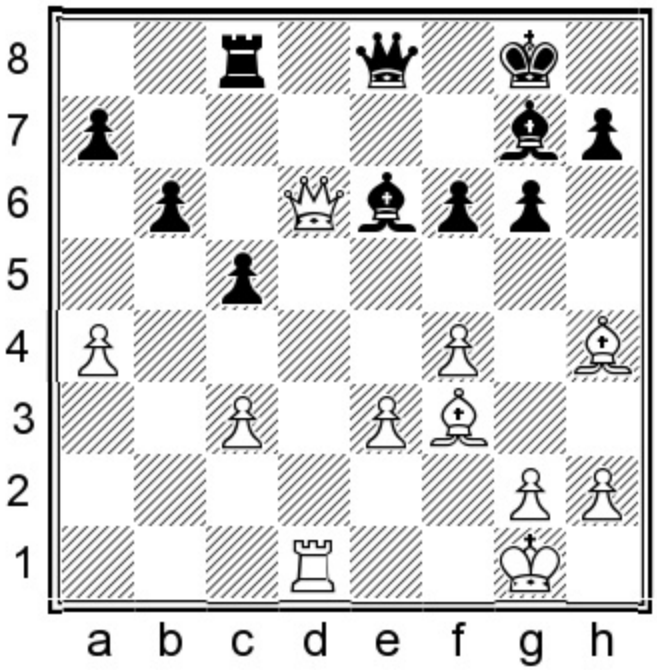
I confess that from far ahead I had hoped for the tactical blow 26.f5! (26...♗xf5 27.♗g3 ♖c8 28.♗b7), but in time noticed a twin objection – 26...♗b3 or 26...♗c4. I had to be satisfied with activity along the occupied file, but alas, not for long...



26...♖c8!?

The only reply, but a sufficient one, immediately repulsing two threats – 27.♕c7 and 27.♗c6.

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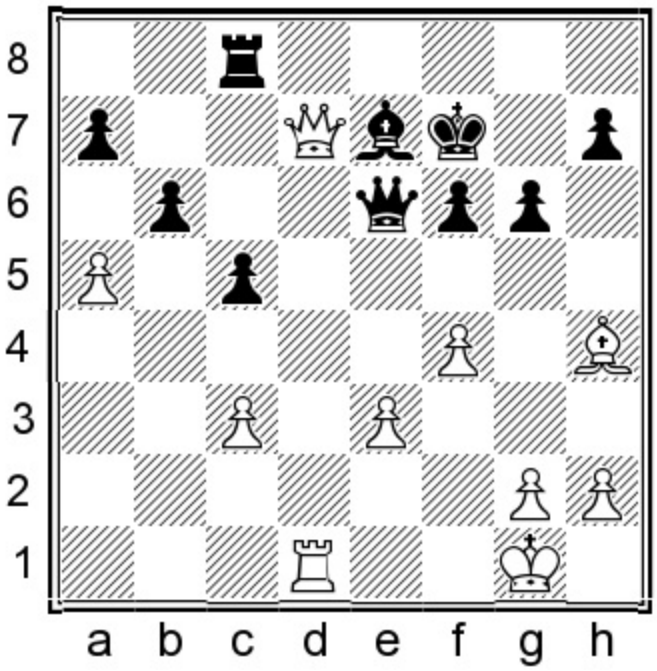
27.a5

This and the 29th move are two final attempts to maintain the fading initiative. The active resources are drying up. 37

27...♗f8!? 28.♕d2 ♗e7 29.♗d5 ♕f7 30.♗xe6 ♕xe6 31.♕d7 ♔f7!?

Of course not 31...♕xe3†? in view of 32.♗f2.

By a long series of virtually forced moves, and with the momentary support of the opponent (White's 22nd move), Fischer has managed to overcome the negative results of a rather unsuccessful opening, and he can finally breathe easily. An endgame is no longer dangerous for Black.



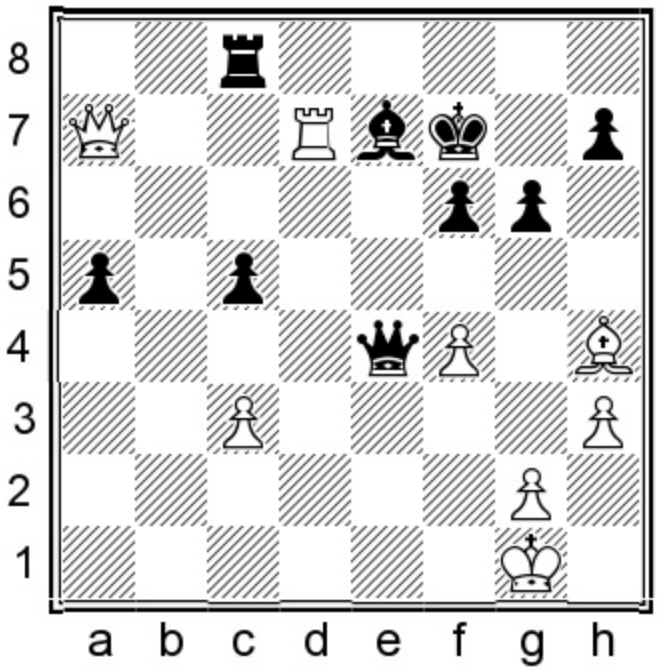
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32.♕xa7 bxa5 33.e4 ♕c6!

A superb manoeuvre, already forcing White to display caution. The a5-pawn is invulnerable on account of the threat of 34...♖a8.

34.♖d7 ♕xe4 35.h3

An escape square is essential. Only by securing the safety of his king can White count on an initiative to compensate for the loss of the pawn.



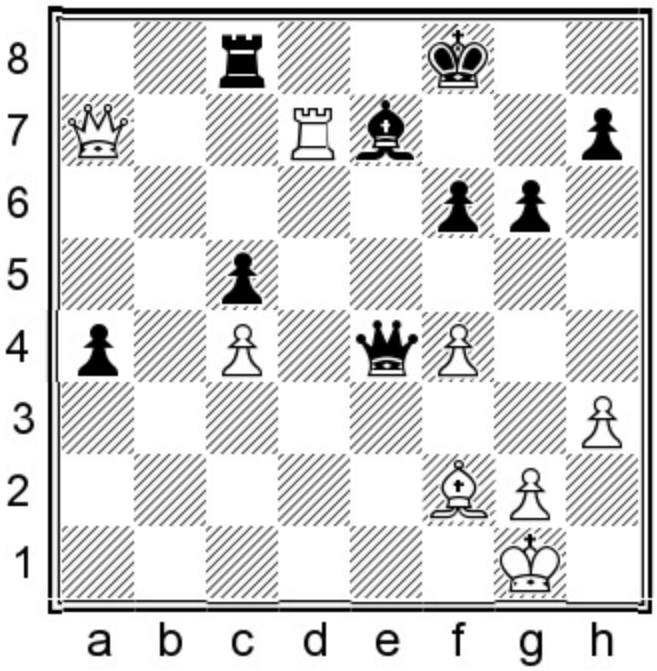
35...a4 36.♗f2

White has managed to activate his forces to the maximum, but the resources prove insufficient to shatter the enemy lines. Objectively, the game is close to a peaceful outcome.

36...♔f8 38

37.c4

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37...a3!?

Of course, 37...♖a8 would not do in view of 38.♕c7 with the threat of 39.♖xe7, but Fischer exploits his 'doomed' pawn to the maximum advantage.

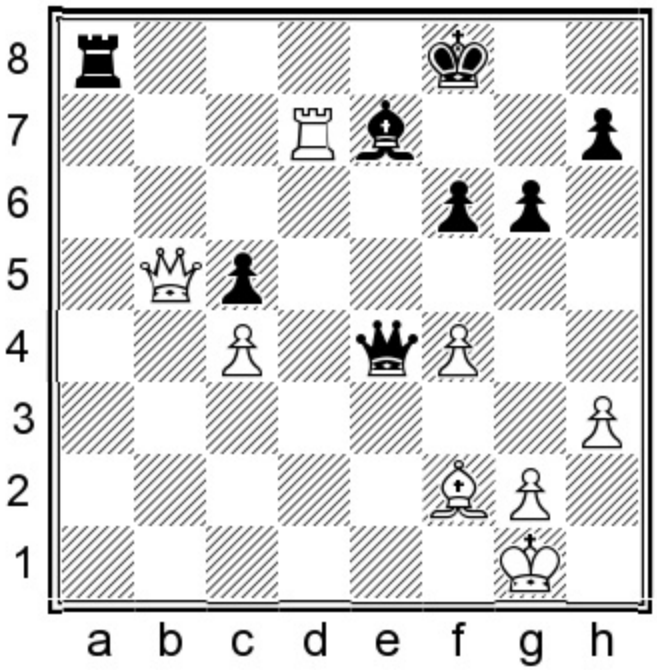
38.♕xa3 ♖a8

As the reader has already seen, space for his pieces came above all else for Fischer. On this occasion he even neglected the possibility of taking one of the pawns.

Admittedly, after 38...♕xc4 he could not have liked the concrete 39.♕e3 ♖e8 (or 39...♕f7) 40.f5, while in the case of 38...♕xf4 he probably reckoned with the possibility of the activation of the white bishop along the c1-h6 diagonal, as well as along the h2-b8 diagonal. Here is one such interesting variation: 39.♕d3 ♖a8 40.♗g3 ♖a1† 41.♔h2 ♕f1 (or 41...♕c1) 42.♗d6! ♕xd3 43.♗xe7† ♔e8 44.♖xd3 ♔xe7 45.♖d5 with a draw.

39.♕b2 ♔e8 40.♕b5 ♔f8

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41.♖d1

It was of course also possible to repeat the position, but it seemed to me that there was a minimal advantage on my side.

41...♕xf4 42.♗xc5

The sealed move. The resources remaining for the continuation of the battle are, of course, few, but even in the simplest of positions fate was destined to play an evil trick on me.

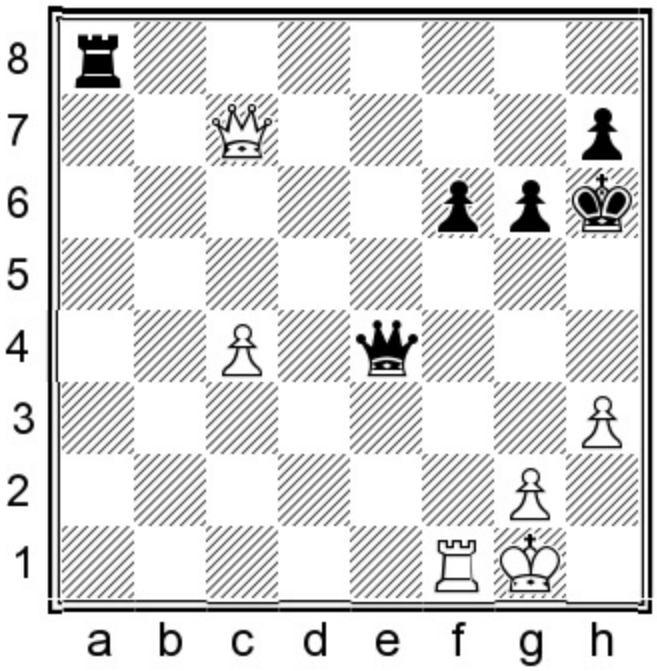
42...♗xc5† 43.♕xc5† ♔g7 44.♖f1 39

44...♕e4

I recall that in analysis we had in the main examined the reply 44...♕e5, leading after the exchange of queens to a slightly worse endgame for Black. The move actually played by Fischer was unanimously rejected, according to the general opinion that it was inexpedient for him to give up the f6-pawn...

45.♕c7† ♔h6

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Here I thought for a few minutes – confused by the thought: why had Fischer all the same gone in for the sacrifice of the pawn? And then I found an explanation – Fischer does not like passive defence and therefore preferred 44...♕e4 to the move 44...♕e5. Now after 46.♖xf6 he replies 46...♖a2, and I would have to exchange queens: 47.♕f4† ♕xf4 48.♖xf4 and his rook takes up an active position on c2, which guarantees Fischer the draw. "Well, alright," I decided, "it will at least be a moral victory – an extra pawn."

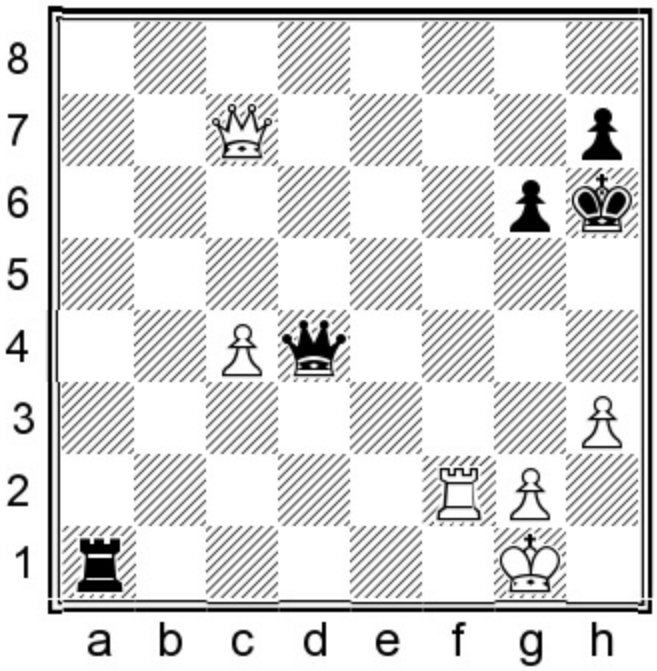
The following took place in a matter of seconds:

46.♖xf6??

And with the words "I'm sorry", and as if embarrassed by the cruel role that had fallen to him, Fischer played:

46...♕d4† 47.♖f2 ♖a1†

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And once again I resigned.

0–1

Even now, twenty years later, I feel the sensation of bitterness, injustice and the cruelty of fate that I experienced back then. We both left the stage silently...

Later, Tal wrote: “Before the adjournment, attack and defence were worthy of one another – a genuine grandmaster game! In the adjourned position Taimanov retained some advantage, but Black’s chances of a draw were higher than White’s of victory. The third possibility was not even considered... It was of course possible to offer a draw: there was no basis for the American grandmaster to refuse it. But personally, I do not see a great difference between the score 4½–½ and 5–0, and Taimanov’s decision to resume this game is more to my liking than, say, Hübner’s action in renouncing the struggle in his match against Petrosian. 40
What took place in the adjourned session of the 5th game, only eyewitnesses can tell. It is simply unbelievable that three grandmasters could blunder a whole rook three moves after the resumption of play. It is also difficult to imagine how Taimanov could have got it into his head that Fischer, after home analysis, would have blundered a pawn out of nowhere. Not a bad riddle for the psychologists!”
I can only add that after the experience of the latest nightmare there suddenly came a feeling of relief and complete relaxation. This was a happy defensive reaction of the exhausted organism. I simply did not have the strength to care anymore and according to the well-known principle ‘the worse, the better’ – there came into my head a soothing idea – if I could lose even these types of positions, it meant that it was simply ‘the evils of fate’, against which it was pointless to resist. Everyone would understand that it was unnatural for a grandmaster to commit mistakes such as those that I had committed over the course of the whole match, and the matter lay not so much in the chess superiority of Fischer over Taimanov, as in some other unexplained reason. I just wanted to forget it all as soon as possible. But there still remained one game. I confess, it was absolutely all the same to

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me how it ended. The suitcases were packed, and I had booked tickets for the next available flight.

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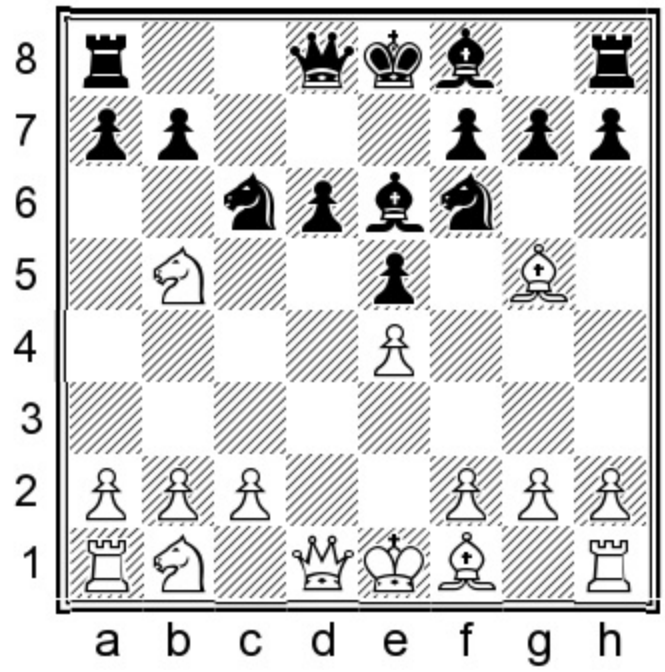
GAME 6

Robert James Fischer – Mark Taimanov

Candidates quarter-final (6), Vancouver 1971

Sicilian Defence

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘b5 d6 6.♗f4 e5 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.♗g5 ♗e6



If the result no longer matters, then it is at least interesting to continue the theoretical dispute begun in the 2nd game. There, as the reader already knows, I played 8...♕a5†. But this time I wanted to exploit the opportunity to test a different way of handling my favourite variation. Its main aim is to

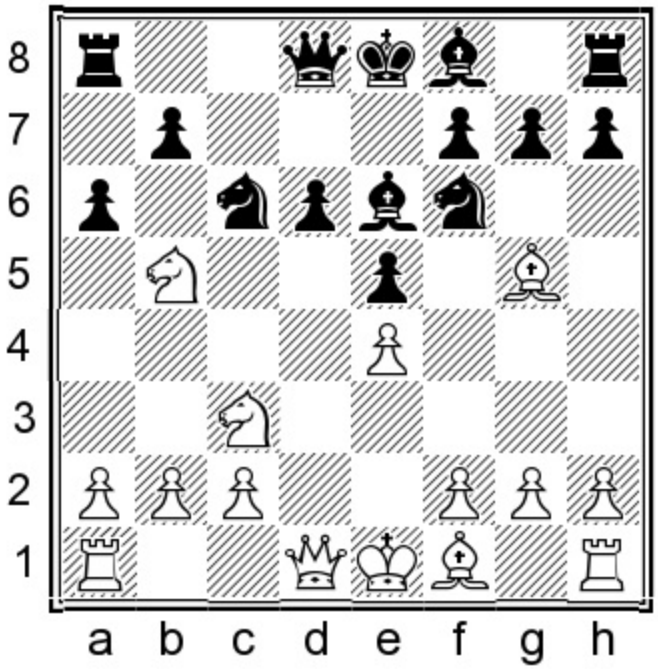
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activate the queenside pieces more quickly.

9.♘1c3

At various times 9.c4, 9.♗xf6 and 9.♘d2 have been tried here, but for Fischer there was never any alternative to the healthy centralization of his pieces. The natural development of the knight with control over the key square d5 – what could be better?!

9...a6



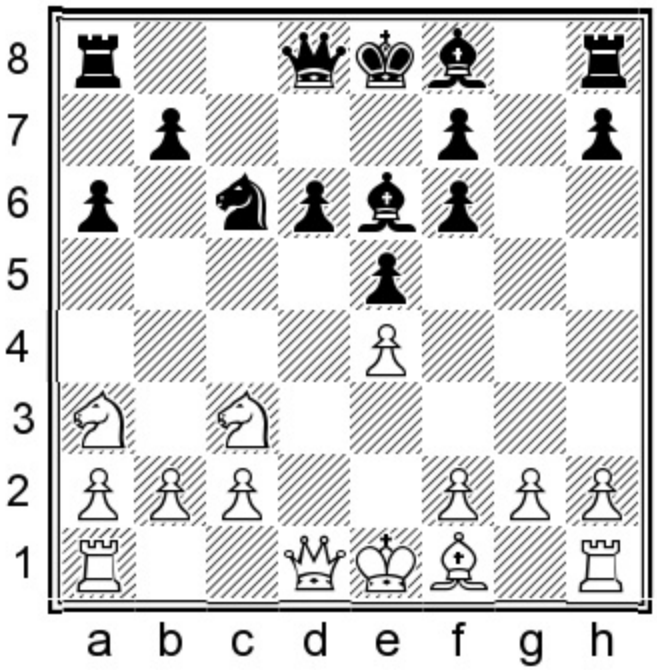
10.♗xf6

Here too, Fischer did not hesitate. Remember Botvinnik's observation? "Fischer likes to 'spoil' the opponent's pawns."

Of course, in the case of 10.♘a3 ♗e7 11.♘c4 ♘d4 12.♘e3 0-0 Black has nothing to fear.

10...gxf6 11.♘a3

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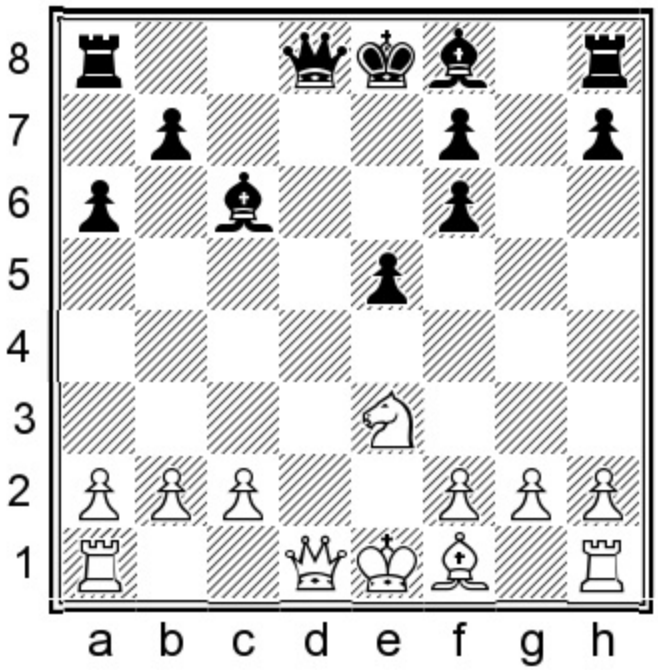


11...♘d4

I had attentively studied this position on the eve of the match, since it had already been encountered in Fischer's practice, and he is, as is well known, stubborn in his opening convictions. And the knight move, the idea of which belongs to Miguel Najdorf, seemed during the process of preparation to be the best continuation. Alas, as the reader will see from the further course of events, in our game Fischer managed to cast doubt on this assessment.

And therefore, running ahead, I will say that in the process of the evolution of the variation for Black, other paths in pursuit of counterplay were found: first I, in a game against Anatoly Karpov in the USSR Championship of 1971, tested the continuation: 11...♘e7 12.♘c4 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xd5 15.♘e3 ♗c6

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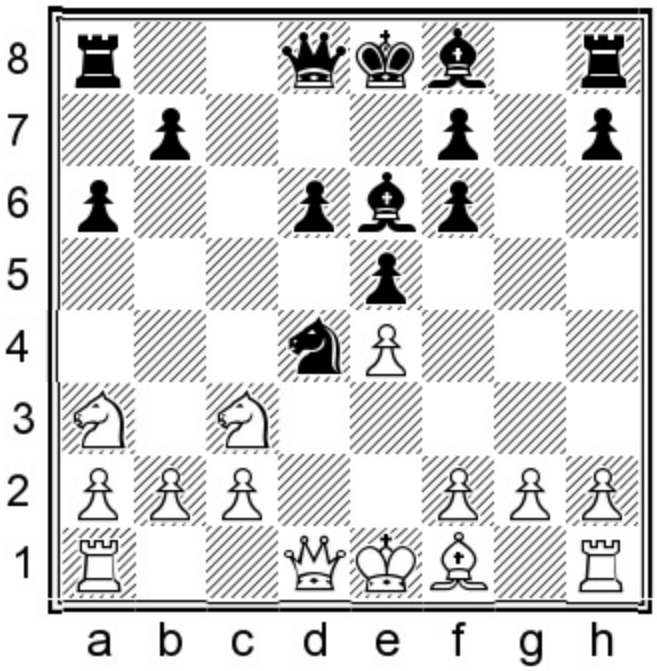


After which 16.♗c4 ♕xd1† 17.♖xd1 ♖c8 led to an acceptable endgame for Black. 41
While Tigran Petrosian then managed to think up an altogether more radical plan of play for Black! 42
In the first game of his match with Fischer, played in Buenos Aires only two weeks after my encounter with Karpov, he demonstrated a truly remarkable idea: in the position depicted in the diagram, Petrosian boldly played 11...d5, which threw his mighty opponent into a state of perfectly understandable bewilderment. And indeed, in a paradoxical manner Black blows up the front at the opponent's most fortified spot! To Fischer's honour, he overcame the shock of the surprise and found a way to avoid the main dangers. All the same, after 12.exd5 ♗xa3 13.bxa3 ♕a5 14.♕d2 0-0-0 15.♗c4 ♖hg8! the initiative proved to be in the hands of Petrosian! 43

This is how opening theory develops. And when you come across such creative discoveries, you not only admire the deep and inexhaustible content of the game of chess, you catch yourself thinking: "Why did such an idea not come into my head?!"

But we return to our game.

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12.♘c4

This manoeuvre too, I had taken account of in advance. It was recommended as strongest by... Fischer himself. In his well-known game against Najdorf from the tournament in Santa Monica in 1966, Fischer tried 12.♗c4, but did not achieve any advantage and in his annotations supplied the bishop move with a question mark, giving preference to the move by the knight. 44

12...f5

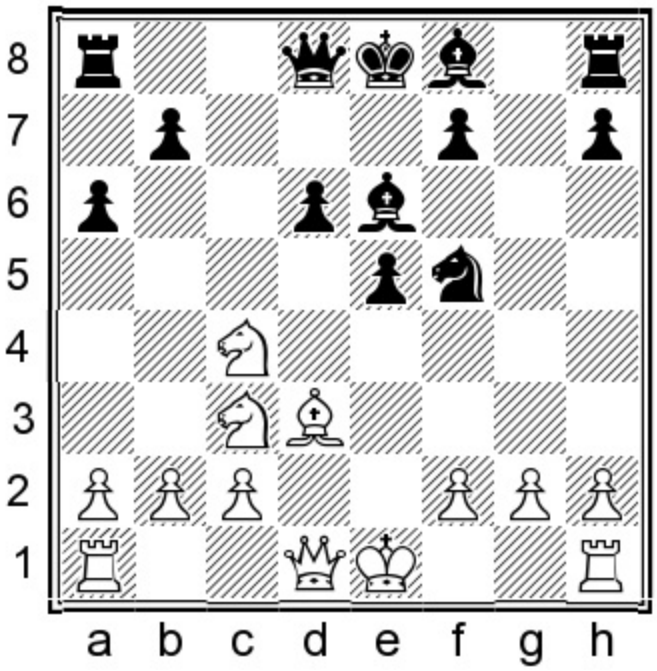
My hopes were tied to this undermining move: the main 'blocker' of the centre – the white e-pawn – is now exchanged, Black safely rids himself of the doubled pawns and his pieces are developed without hindrance – seemingly, what more could be desired from the opening?

13.exf5 ♘xf5

Deserving attention is the continuation 13...♗xf5 14.♘e3 ♗g6, but I did not want to remove control from the important d5-square.

14.♗d3

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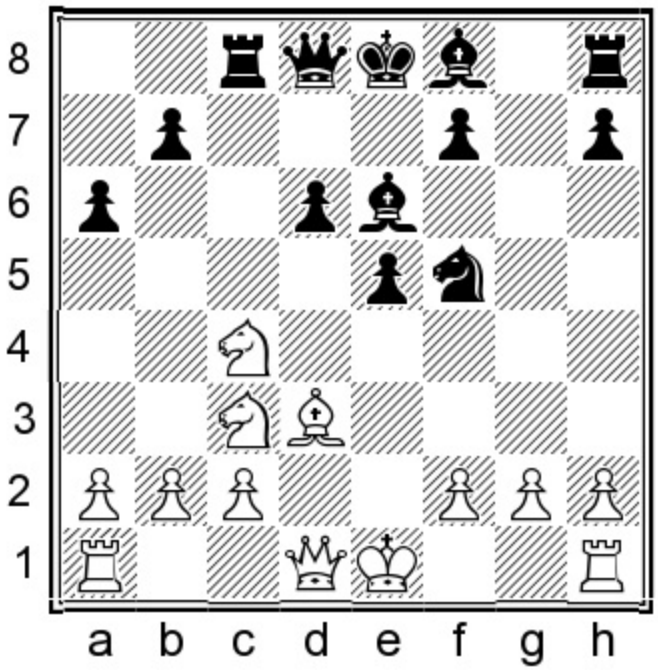
14...♖c8

For the time being events were unfolding according to plan and I recall that it seemed to me that there was no basis for unease. Now, looking more objectively at the resultant picture of the battle, I understand that in Black's camp all is not so well: no safe station for his king is apparent, there is no harmonious coordination between his pieces, and in addition his pawn structure, made up of three weakened 'islands', can become the subject of concern. And therefore, perhaps, Black should not reach for simplification, which only underlines the minuses of his set-up (as occurs in the following moves), but try to complicate the struggle, retaining a greater number of fighting units and trying as far as possible to avoid the opening of the centre.

These aims were met by the manoeuvre 14...♘d4, which was later recommended by the profound strategist Isaac Boleslavsky. To reinforce his idea he gave the following analysis: 15.0-0 (or 15.♘e3 d5 16.♕h5 ♗g7) 15...♕c7 16.♘e3 f5 17.f4 (if 17.♘cd5, then 17...♕f7 18.♘b6 ♖d8 19.c3 ♘c6 20.♕a4 f4 21.♘ec4 ♕c7) 17...0-0-0, and in all cases Black has his trumps.

Alas, objectivity, such a necessity in tense situations, had deserted me at the end of the match, at the same time as optimism...

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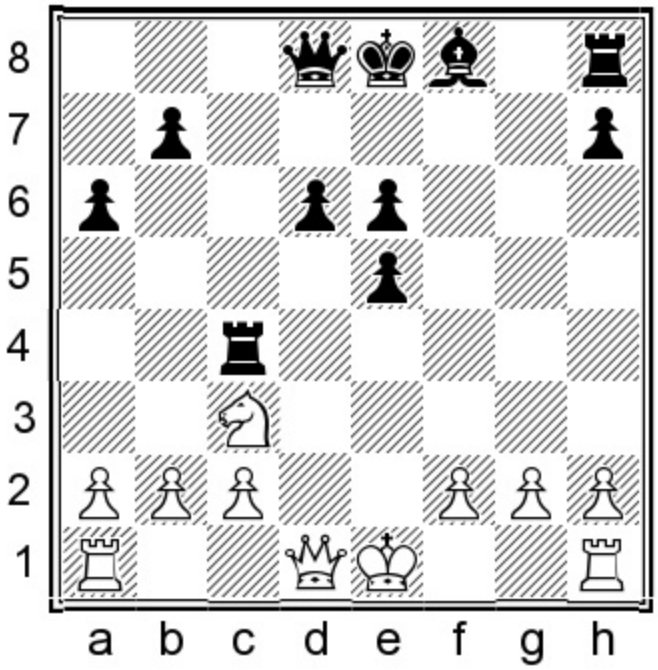


15.♗xf5 ♖xc4

A further link in the ill-advised plan.

As I now understand, better would have been 15...♗xf5 16.♘e3 ♗g6 with hope in the potential of the two bishops. 45

16.♗xe6 fxe6



If one looks at this diagram with an unbiased eye, the conclusion is obvious: the position has noticeably simplified, but Black's problems have only deepened. It is sufficient for White to open the game for the minuses of Black's set-up to become clear. But the most curious thing is that I went in

for this position quite intentionally, and during the period of preparation it had been on my analytical table. Moreover, I had assessed it as perfectly satisfactory. Probably, an important role in this was played by the game Estrin – Borisenko from the USSR Correspondence Championship, where after 17.♕f3 ♕c7 18.0-0-0 Black, with the move 18...♕f7 (which I had prepared as an improvement in comparison with Borisenko's manoeuvre 18...♖f4) could have achieved comfortable play.

I do not know whether Fischer was familiar with this game (although I had many occasions to believe that he read everything!), but the following move is evidence of deep penetration into the secrets of the resultant situation.

17.♕e2!

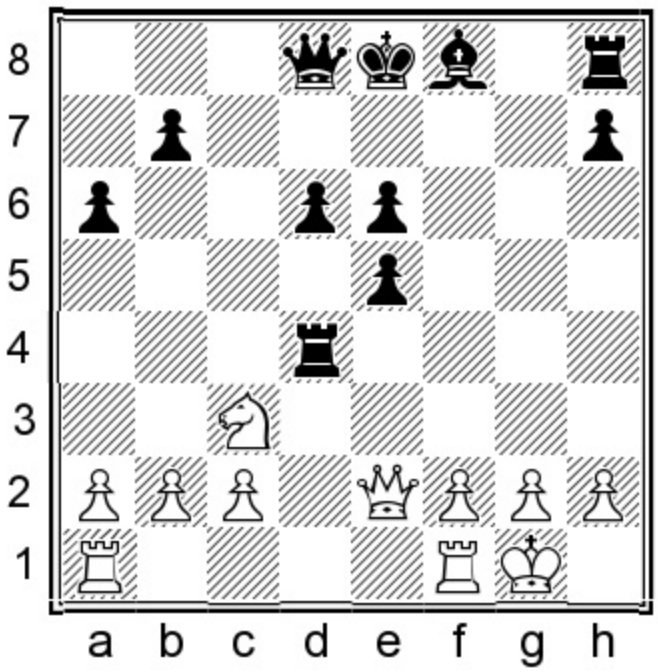
The strongest continuation. White wins an important tempo for the mobilization of his forces. It is astonishing that this manoeuvre escaped my field of vision during the preparation for the match.

I recall that I examined only 17.♕h5†, which is not dangerous for Black in view of 17...♔d7, and 17.♕f3, as played by Estrin...

17...♖d4?!

The first independent move at the board, and immediately an unsuccessful one. Its idea is clear – to prevent long castling, but the rook on d4, although occupying an outwardly attractive, active position, is essentially vulnerable – it is easily exchanged. The correct decision would have been 17...♕c7 followed by the evacuation of the king to the queen's flank. Then things would not have been so bad for Black.

18.0-0



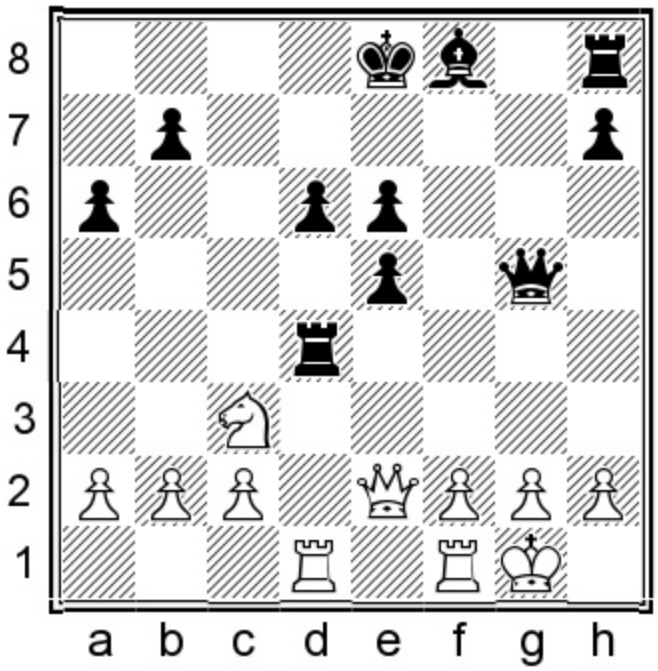
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18...♕g5

First and foremost, 19.f4 was threatened.

19.♖ad1

Do you remember? “Fischer does not tolerate active pieces for the opponent and at the first opportunity exchanges them.” (Botvinnik).



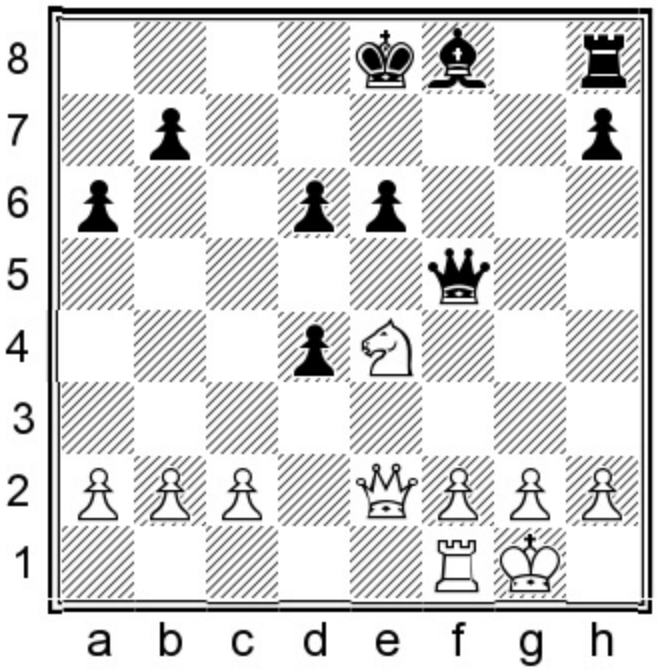
19...♕f5

Once again a questionable decision. The rook was better exchanged on d1. After the exchange on d4 Black’s pawn structure in the centre loses its stability.

The continuation 19...♖g8 20.g3 ♖xd1 21.♖xd1 d5 would, at any rate, have been the lesser of the evils.

20.♖xd4 exd4 21.♘e4

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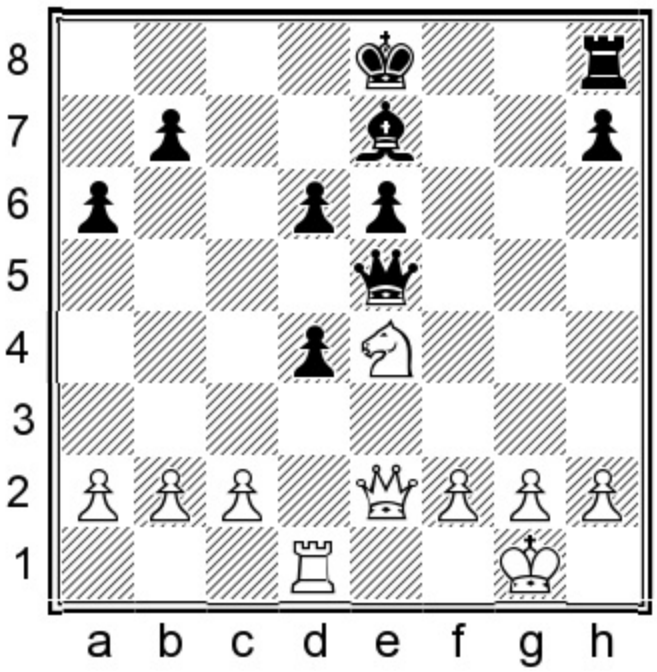
21...♗e7?

Black's play bears the stamp of doom. His position is clearly worse, but still not altogether hopeless. But instead of getting set for a tenacious defence, say, with 21...♔d7, he simply blunders the central pawn.

22.♖d1 ♕e5

Alas, the natural 22...e5 will not do in view of 23.♖xd4! exd4 24.♘xd6†.

Yuri Balashov considered that it was still possible to resist by means of 22...♕b5 23.♕xb5† axb5 24.♖xd4 d5 25.♘g3 b4, but, objectively speaking, in this case too, few saving chances remained.



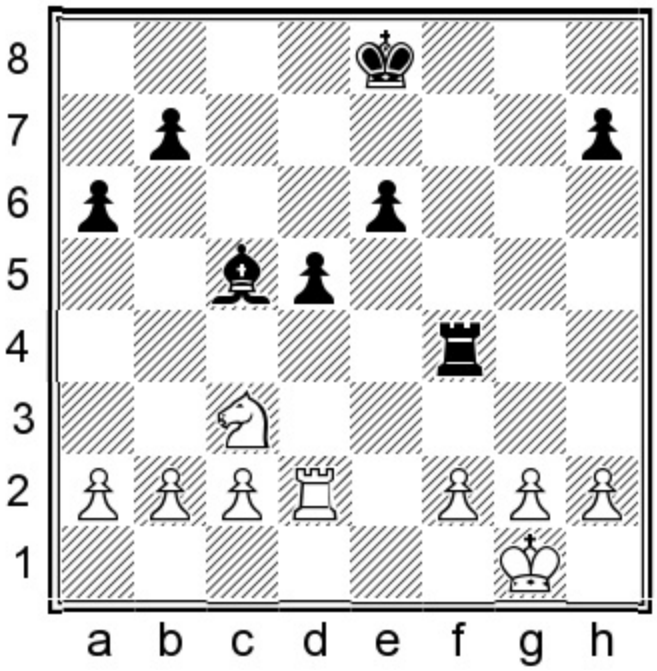
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23.♕d3 ♖f8

What is there to do? On 23...d5, then 24.♘d2 followed by 25.♘f3 is decisive.

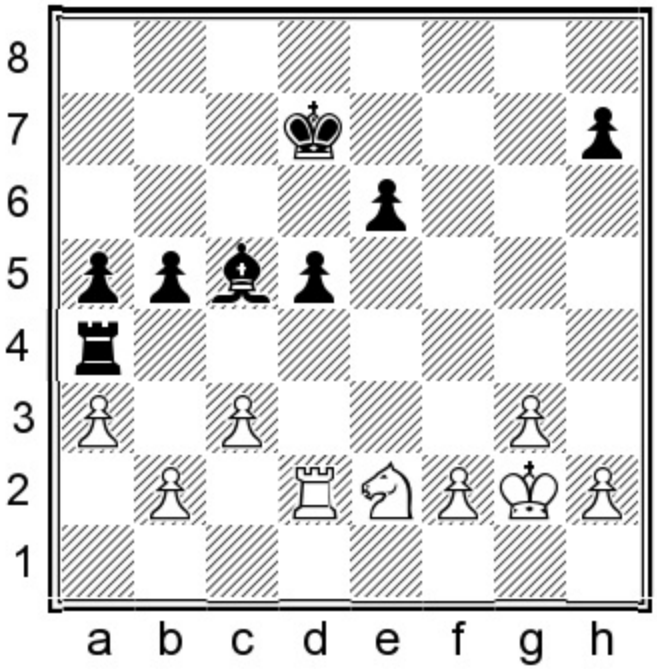
24.♕xd4 ♕xd4 25.♖xd4 d5 26.♘c3 ♗c5 27.♖d2 ♖f4

The black pieces have become noticeably more lively, but a pawn is missing... The remainder is in general no more than a matter of the technique of realizing the material advantage, and Fischer never lacked this.



28.g3 ♖c4 29.♘e2 ♖a4 30.a3 ♔d7 31.♔g2 b5 32.c3 a5

Perhaps for the first time in the whole game the 'hint' of an initiative has appeared for Black. Seemingly, the motif of a breakthrough on the queen's flank has become his counter-chance. But...



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33.♘d4! b4 34.♘b3

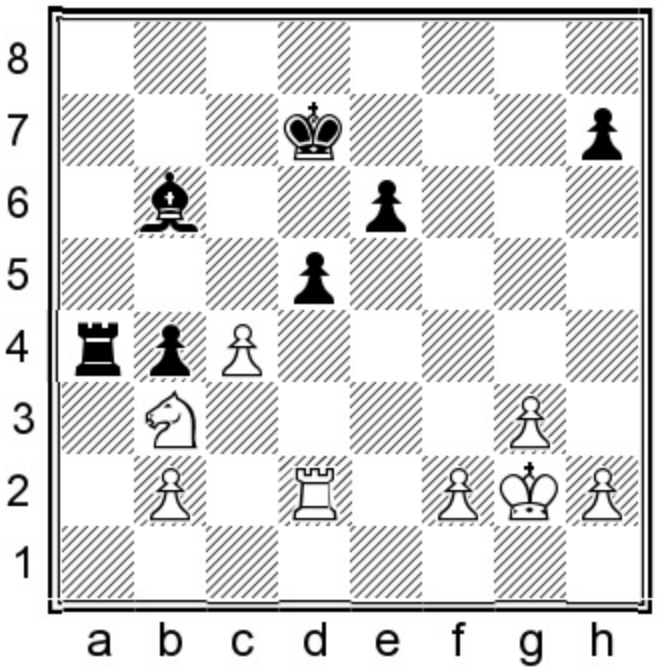
With a splendid knight manoeuvre, Fischer deprives the opponent of any illusions that he may have had. The black bishop must abandon its active position (34...♔c6? 35.cxb4 axb4 36.♖c2) and the loss of tempo associated with this permits Fischer to go over to the counter-offensive. It is amazing, this ability of the great grandmaster, both in attack and defence – his pieces get to the epicentre of events at just the right time!

34...♗b6

Also in the case of 34...♗d6, then 35.axb4 axb4 36.c4! (36...dxc4? 37.♘c5†) is very unpleasant for Black.

35.axb4 axb4 36.c4

The coordination of forces has been flawlessly established by Fischer's skilful hands and there is no way remaining for Black to resist.



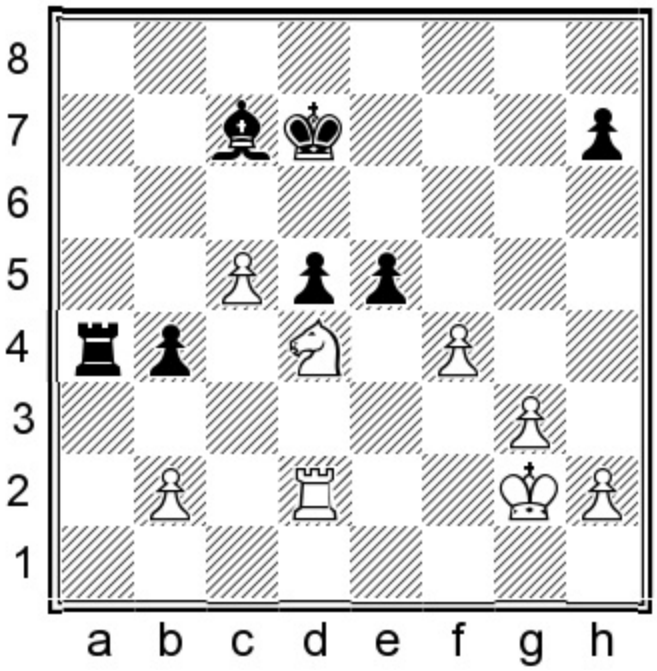
36...♔c6 37.c5!

In such positions Fischer was irresistible!

37...♗c7 38.♘d4† ♔d7 39.f4 e5

What else? Y. Balashov recommended here 39...b3 40.♘xb3 ♖b4, after which Black's pieces are activated to some extent, but after all, this been at the cost of another lost pawn...

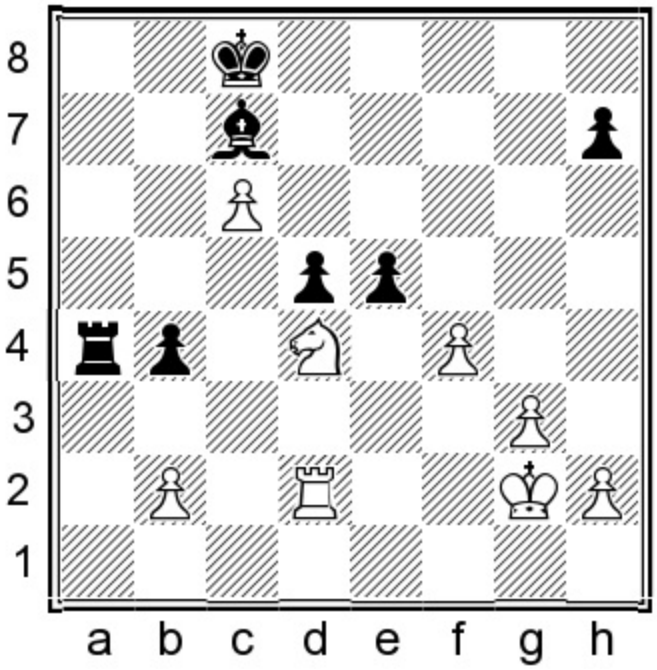
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40.c6†!

An important *zwischenzug*, shattering once and for all the opponent's defence. The point is that now 40...♔d6 will not do in view of 41.fxe5† ♔xe5 42.♘b5 ♗b6 43.♖e2† ♔f6 44.c7 ♖a8 45.♖c2 ♖c8 46.♘d6! ♖xc7 47.♘e8†.

40...♔c8



41.♘b5!

Every move of Fischer's in this endgame radiates astonishing energy!

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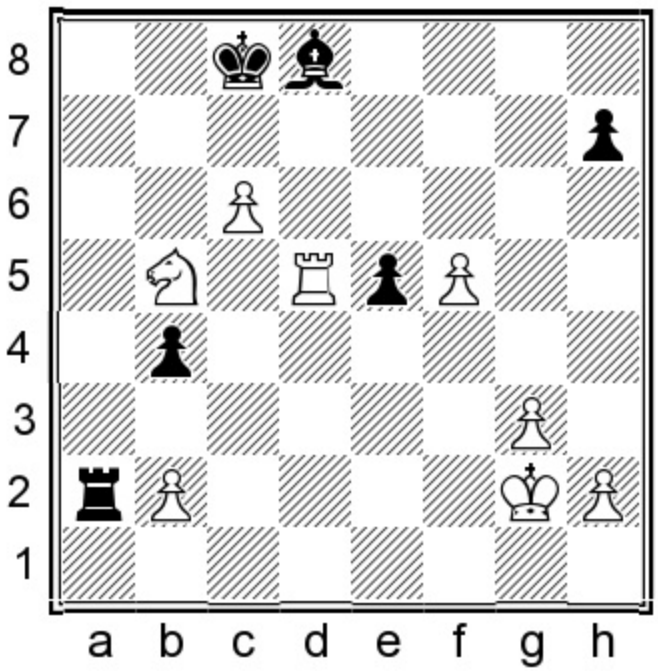
41...♖a2

On 41...exf4 there would have followed 42.♖xd5 and, if 42...♖a2, then 43.♖d7 ♖xb2† 44.♔f3 with an immediate win. However, there is all the same no salvation to be had.

42.f5!

While Black could still have dealt with one passed pawn, he will not be able to cope with two.

42...♗d8 43.♖xd5



In this position the game was adjourned. I sealed the move 43...♖xb2†, but naturally resigned without resuming. Fischer played the whole game magnificently, but I, alas, was no longer capable of standing in his way...

1–0

Thus my match with the great Robert James Fischer, full of enormous inner drama and large-scale creative content, ended. Ended, leaving many puzzles...

Everything that I then experienced, thought, went through, understood, I have already shared frankly with the reader. There is nothing to add. And therefore I will present what was said about the match by my respected colleagues, for a more objective assessment.

First of all, Bobby Fischer: “The 6–0 result was too much. The battle was more difficult than the final score would indicate. Taimanov had a won position in the 3rd game, where 11.♕b3 was a very important innovation, and he stood better in the 1st and 5th. It’s easier to be a gentleman when you win than when you lose, and so I congratulate Taimanov.”

Boris Spassky: “Taimanov’s chances in the match lay in good opening preparation; his fighting spirit was also impressive. But it is very difficult to play against Fischer – he confronts his opponent with

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difficult problems. The difference in age should also be taken into account. Fischer is 28. Taimanov is 45. The 6–0 result is terrible. But the struggle was unusually full of content."

Mikhail Tal: "The match ended with the 'tennis' score 6–0. What can one add to this? To say that Fischer once again demonstrated his enormous strength is to repeat oneself. One can only note his practically flawless technique, his quick reactions, his clear-cut focus on the opponent's lapses. And his amazing opening erudition when playing with White. Fischer chooses what are seemingly not the most active continuations. But each time he obtains his favourite types of position, which he plays in truly virtuoso fashion.

"At the same time the opening repertoire of the American grandmaster when playing with Black is by no means reliable. But, as one hero in the movie 'Some Like It Hot' said – "Well, nobody's perfect!"

"Taimanov, however, was simply let down by his nerves and his habitual optimism, i.e. those factors that are usually his allies. Many have criticized the pre-match statements of the Leningrader, in which he praised the fate that had led to him being paired against Fischer. But optimism had always served Taimanov faithfully and truly. And the Leningrader could not have guessed that it would turn into a boomerang..." 46

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PART III

THE AFTERMATH

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CHESS LIFE & REVIEW

United States Chess Federation *July 1971–Price 85 cents*



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Since then many years have passed. There has been less and less information about Fischer, but the news has been more and more sad. At first it became known that he had broken off with his friends and with his church; he survived the shock when, mistaken for a bank robber, he was arrested by the police – of which he wrote in his booklet *I Was Tortured in the Pasadena Jailhouse!* 47;
He changed his place of residence frequently, not showing up at home for weeks, coming round only to collect mail; he lived in complete dependence on others...

Then the news grew more alarming: the newspaper *The Boston Globe* wrote: "Fischer has retained his love of chess and as before he would be able to defeat any grandmaster. But he is sick; he is an intelligent man, but in a bad state, he has no money, and he is very poor..."

What then was the reason for such a tragic metamorphosis? Where lie the origins of the great life dramas of the outstanding chessplayer?

There are many theories on this score, but they are all agree on the main point – chess created Fischer, but it also ruined him.

Robert Fischer was the eleventh World Chess Champion; he had ten outstanding predecessors and already now he has had two worthy successors. But Fischer cannot be compared with any of them, since for them chess, although important, was far from the main thing, and still less the only thing in their lives; Fischer however dedicated himself to chess completely and utterly. For Fischer the world divided into two unequal categories – chessplayers and... everyone else. With colleagues he found a common language, he was interested and respectful. With others there was not much to talk about. Only those who liked or loved chess could become his friends. Even if he was talking with, say, Henry Kissinger – who played an active part in Fischer's fate on the eve of his match with Spassky – then Bobby saw in him not so much the Secretary of State of the USA, but a chessplayer... admittedly, not one with a very high Elo-rating. Moreover, everyday criteria for Fischer were determined by chess categories. When in Reykjavík he somewhat unexpectedly appeared in the company of a charming woman, and the journalists at once began to ask him about his matrimonial

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plans, Fischer parried with: “Get married? That is as dangerous as taking the pawn on b2 with the queen in the Sicilian Defence!” And this was not a joke, but a most convincing argument in the mouth of a grandmaster, since he knew everything there was to know about this variation. This was why for Fischer the title of World Champion meant much more than recognition of his sporting merits. If chess were the only thing of value in life, and he were the chess king, then he had to be some kind of undisputed absolute in it. The highest title seemed to oblige a sense of infallibility, and in return he demanded recognition, reverence and even submission.

Possibly this is speculation and subjectivity, but it reveals much in the tragic fate of the American champion. Already in 1857 the great chessplayer of those years Adolf Anderssen prophetically wrote: “Your art cannot be kept under glass and extracted at will. On the contrary, it can be retained only thanks to constant use.” Robert Fischer punished not only himself; he deprived the chess world of many unplayed games, many unpublished profound analyses and many unwritten books. But during that short period in which he devoted himself completely to chess, Fischer revolutionized public perception of this amazing art. He aroused interest not only by his brilliant play and his cascade of successes. Fischer, taking upon himself the mission of an original ‘chess trade union leader’, managed to change the very attitude towards chess, achieved a high level of recognition for it, public authority and – lastly and most importantly – professional status. And although Fischer was continually condemned for his commercialism, egocentricity and capriciousness, he personally did not get anything out of this. In general, Fischer proved to be selfless. He passed up millions in royalties, and in our match it is difficult to even believe that he was satisfied with the prize of $2,000. But his constant battles with the organizers of competitions, chess personalities and patrons to improve tournament conditions and finally achieve a decent level of respect for chessplayers bore fruit years later.

And for the fact that chess today is so popular, honoured – even prestigious, is in no small measure due to Robert James Fischer, a champion who became a legend in his own lifetime.

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The book is finished. Having said everything that I remembered about Robert Fischer, how I understood his fate, how I assessed and admired his chess genius, I can draw a line under it.

But my interest in this mysterious, bright personality has by no means exhausted itself. Like his legions of fans, I catch every bit of news about Fischer, every word. The more so since from time to time journalists pour fat on the fire with sensational reports. Sadly, these are usually in the style of scandalous narratives and lack any reverence for the hero.

But even such information arouses memories. And therefore without any commentary, and leaving the credibility on the conscience of the authors, I will add in conclusion a few interesting publications gleaned from the world's press.

ON THE HUNT FOR BOBBY FISCHER

The Czechoslovak newspaper Stadion reports on the adventures of a Swiss journalist

The journalist was almost there: now, now he would take the picture of the century! But how wrong the reporter was! Fischer almost knocked the camera out of his hands. Ever since Fischer gave up chess and, joining a religious sect, began to sport a beard, moustache and long hair, no-one has had the right to photograph him. However, this episode took place ten years ago...

Bobby Fischer, World Chess Champion from 1972-1975, suddenly hid himself from boundless glory, in solitude and seclusion. He did not play against the challenger to the chess crown, A. Karpov, and has never again participated in a single tournament. It was known only that Fischer had become a follower of the 'Worldwide Church of God' and had settled near Pasadena in California.

And then, not long ago, after a long 'search' and enormous efforts, a Swiss journalist managed to penetrate Bobby's 'fortress', and even to sit with him at the same table, admittedly having overcome the tenacious resistance of his secretary-Cerberus. And of course, no camera was allowed!

This encounter was organized according to all the canons of the detective genre. Calls from prearranged telephone booths. The flashing of car headlights. A long spin around town in the car, so as to throw possible pursuers off the trail. And, finally, entrance through a hidden gate into the home.

And there is Bobby Fischer! But what does he look like? An Alpine peasant who was just about to prepare some Emmental cheese.

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The guest passes two letters from friends and is surprised that Fischer, nervous and with shifting eyes, out of all the chess news is most of all interested in a report that Korchnoi has quit drinking and smoking.

"This is incredible!" exclaims Bobby. "When I saw him for the last time at the tournament in Zagreb 48 he was smoking one cigarette after another. And it was a grown man doing it, not a boy! Once I started watching the clock to see how long Korchnoi was holding smoke in his lungs – 31 seconds! People are crazy!"

But still, our story is about how the Swiss tried to photograph Fischer. Alas, he did not succeed in this. But... the journalist nonetheless accompanied his interview with the 'recluse from Pasadena' with photo shoots in which everyone saw Fischer going about his daily business. How did this happen? With the help of an identikit. Exactly the same kind that helps historians reconstruct the face of an ancient ruler, and the police – the face of a modern gangster.

This Swiss turned out to be truly resourceful! For the first time in the history of sport, the identikit produced a snapshot of a living, formerly famous sportsman. (Incidentally, the journalist swears that photographs of his hero, made in the usual way, would have looked just the same.)

FISCHER'S SHADOW IN EUROPE?
The newspaper Sovietsky Sport, 1990

Nowadays, the American grandmaster Robert James Fischer is not someone who draws attention to himself. Like his legendary compatriot Paul Charles Morphy (1837-1884), he suddenly quit playing 'serious' chess. And in search of a solution to the 'riddle of Fischer', journalists have for a decade and a half already 'mined' information on the life of the voluntary recluse. What are the fresh reports on this theme?

Once, according to rumours, Fischer visited Brussels in the summer, and the legends around him took on new details. It is said that in the presence of Boris Spassky and Jan Timman, the American ex-World Champion showed deep awareness of the analyses of the games of Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov. 49

Could Fischer once again appear in the international arena? Trying to learn something concrete in this connection, a Yugoslav journalist from the newspaper *Politika* turned to local grandmasters. Ljubomir Ljubojević considers that the rumours about Fischer's arrival in the Old World only multiplied the myths about him.

– Were you surprised to learn about Fischer's visit to Europe?

"I could not believe that it had taken place. But if Fischer did appear, then it was only to revive the legends about himself."

– Would it have been possible to hide from the press the appearance of Fischer in the Belgian capital, as well as his desire to take part in some kind of training match?

"I think that it would be incorrect to speak of Fischer's return. Until 1980 such a possibility remained, but from 1983 onwards he himself eliminated any hope of this."

The illustrious maestro Svetozar Gligorić, an old friend of Fischer's, recalls that this was the first time Fischer had appeared in Europe during the last 15 years, if one does not pay attention to a few days

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that he spent in Belgrade in 1979 as Gligorić's guest.

"A year after this visit, we even stopped corresponding. It was my fault for not writing him a line. Our relations are good; I hope that they have not been affected by this. I am very happy that Fischer has finally visited our continent."

In conclusion Gligorić also expressed doubt: Fischer was hardly likely to return to active chess life.

American reporters tried to find a trace of their eminent compatriot and to explain the reason for his self-isolation. However, the 47-year-old Fischer turned out not to be in Pasadena – they had to be satisfied with what those who had at least been in minimal contact with him had to say.

"The reason for his 'hide and seek' was the morbid belief that he was being sought by the Soviet secret service, who intended to snatch him and take him to Siberia," said Harry Sneider, Fischer's sparring partner. "And this imaginary threat completely undermined his psyche."

A neighbour of Fischer's said the following: "In his flat he was extra careful, putting four locks on the door! He would only go into the streets at night. His clothes clung to him, his face was covered with a huge beard and moustache, and also enormous glasses. He ordered food by telephone from the supermarket, the messenger would leave it in front of his door – he would never open the door to anyone."

They also say that during his recent flying visit to Europe, in which some who know him stubbornly do not believe (Fischer – in public?!), the American had demonstrated a new model of chess clock that he had made.

A television journalist from Yugoslavia, Rade Brakov, went to America, saying that his aim was to interview Fischer and to hand him a guest invitation to the 29th Chess Olympiad. "Fischer visited our country many times, and learned the Serbo-Croat language. I want to know if he still remembers it. I am going to Pasadena with a video camera and hope for the very best outcome for my trip."

Florencio Campomanes, visiting Novi Sad (where the Olympiad took place), also could not avoid the question of the possible return of the 11th World Champion to his previous life. In the course of six years, advised the FIDE President, I have tried to convince him to do so, but without success.

Campomanes on Fischer
'64', November 1990

During a recent visit to Yugoslavia the FIDE President Florencio Campomanes advised journalists that he had maintained contact with Robert Fischer and had periodically tried to persuade him to return to chess. "In 1975 I guaranteed him an honorarium of 30 million Swiss Francs in the case of him agreeing to play the match against Karpov, but he refused," said Campomanes. "Six years later I offered him $500,000 to appear in Hong Kong, but once again met with his refusal. He then said that maybe he would agree to appear in some sort of competition, only not one of those taking place under the auspices of FIDE."

Campomanes claimed that the aspiration to return Fischer to chess is the main motive behind his efforts to retain his position as FIDE President. He advised the reporters that Fischer fairly often travels incognito and that, for example, in 1989 alone he had twice travelled to the Philippines and

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had visited Amsterdam on one occasion.

Let us be fooled
'64', October 1991

Spanish television has made a stunning announcement: Bobby Fischer is returning to the chess world!

Here are some details.

The organizer of the super-tournament in Linares, Sr. Luis Rentero, recently visited Los Angeles and signed with the great chess recluse an agreement to a match of ten games, which would be played with a grandmaster of his own choosing. Irrespective of the result, Fischer is guaranteed an appearance fee of two million dollars.

Spanish television viewers treated this announcement with scepticism. Firstly, gossip about Fischer's return has been circulating during the course of almost twenty years and has always proved false; secondly, although Sr. Rentero did not deny the news, nor did he confirm it; and thirdly, it was so incredibly hot in Spain at that time that the television workers could perfectly well have lost their reason...

But all the same we let ourselves be fooled! Although V. Korchnoi in his interview with the magazine *'64'* also declared that the chess world needs a "new Fischer", we would be perfectly satisfied with the 'old' one. However, that last adjective can be said without quotation marks: the American grandmaster is already 48 years old. They say he is bald, has grown a beard and in general looks nothing at all like in the old photographs.

But we remember and always will remember Bobby Fischer exactly as he was 20 years ago.

But God moves in mysterious ways.

And what if?

'64', November 1991

We have already reported on the proposed return to the chess fold of the great 'Pasadena recluse' Robert Fischer. This sensational news was announced by Spanish television, citing the organizer of the super-tournament at Linares, Sr. Luis Rentero, who ostensibly met the American grandmaster in Los Angeles and signed with him an agreement for a match with ten games against any opponent of Fischer's own choosing.

Western media has begun to wonder which grandmaster Fischer would prefer as an opponent. Most often of all there is quoted the name of Boris Spassky – one of the few chessplayers with whom Fischer has retained good relations. Sr. Rentero remained silent for some time, but then claimed that he had indeed visited Fischer in Pasadena (in the state of California), spent ten days with him and expressed the belief that the ex-World Champion had not lost his previous strength. Nothing more could be gleaned from Rentero. We will immediately inform our readers of all the latest turns in this puzzling story.

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Anatoly Lutikov – Mark Taimanov

37th USSR Championship (23), Moscow 1969

Sicilian Defence

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[*Translator's note*: Going into the final round of this marathon event, the standings were as follows:

1-2. Polugaevsky, Geller 13½
3-4. Petrosian, Smyslov 13
5-6. Taimanov, Stein 12½

Five qualifying places for the Interzonal were at stake. Stein was due to face Polugaevsky with the black pieces, while Taimanov was paired against Lutikov.

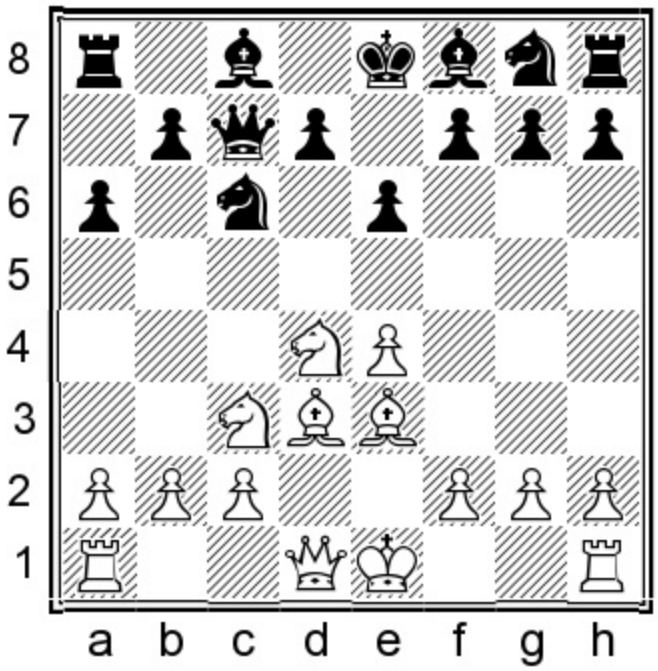
The encounter appears in the pages of *'64'* magazine under the heading 'The Game of My Life', with the introductory editorial remarks:

"Having concluded a tense duel and only just breaking through the enthusiastic crowd, grandmaster Taimanov, together with his friends – the writer L. Zorin, grandmaster E. Vasiukov and his second, master E. Gik – headed to the hotel 'Rossiya', and the chess pieces were again assembled on the board..."

The annotations to this game, by Mark Taimanov, are from *'64'* (No. 42, 1969).]

Yes, I have played many games over the last 30 years. But perhaps not one of them put me through the experiences that this one did. Feel free to disagree, but for me – this is the game of my life.

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 e6 5.♘c3 ♕c7 6.♗e3 a6 7.♗d3



7...b5

Usually, 7...♘f6 is played here. Lutikov, a great specialist in this system, replies, as a rule, with the move 8.♕d2. In this way, in particular, he played against Tal. [*Translator's note*: This encounter, which resulted in the ex-World Champion's defeat, took place in the previous USSR Championship, in Alma-Ata.]

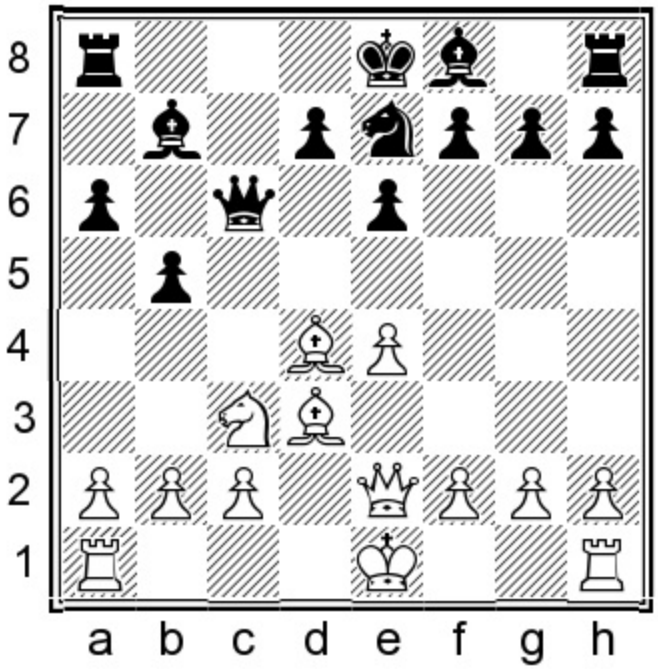
Therefore I decided to employ a rarer continuation. Now 8.♕d2 is not justified on account of 8...♘a5 followed by 9...♘c4.

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8.♘xc6 ♕xc6 9.♗d4

[*Translator's note*: The game Minić – Taimanov, Palma de Mallorca Interzonal 1970, continued instead 9.a3 ♗b7 10.0-0 ♘e7 11.♕g4 ♘g6 12.f4 ♗c5 13.♗xc5 ♕xc5† 14.♔h1 0-0 15.♖ae1 f6!? 16.♘e2 ♖ae8 17.♘g3 (better is 17.c3) 17...♕d4! 18.♘h5 f5! 19.exf5 exf5 20.♕g5 (20.♗xf5? ♖xe1 21.♖xe1 ♖xf5 22.♕xf5? ♗xg2†!) 20...♖xe1 21.♖xe1 ♕xb2, and Black won.]

9...♗b7 10.♕e2 ♘e7



11.f4

The first in a series of moves that impose particular responsibilities on White.

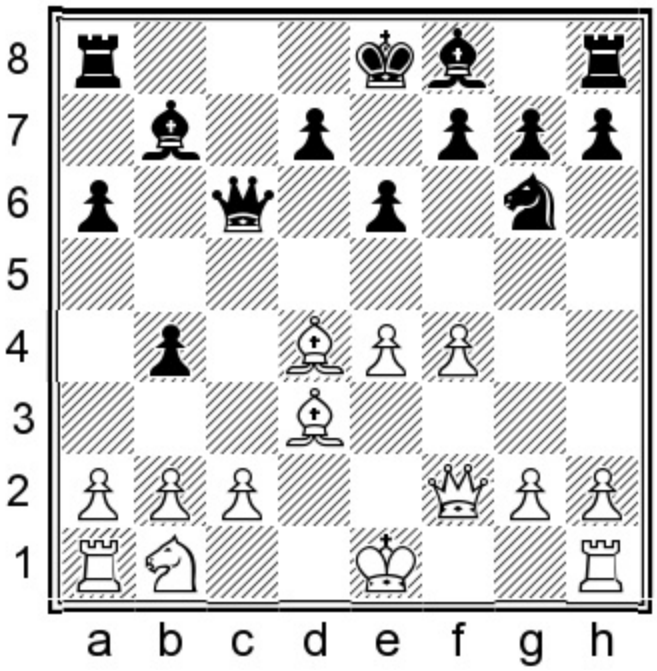
However, on 11.0-0-0, then 11...b4 is unpleasant, while after 11.0-0 he has to reckon with 11...♘f5!.

11...b4 12.♘b1 ♘g6 13.♕f2

Seemingly, what more could be demanded from one move – the queen defends the f4-pawn, increases control over the diagonal g1-a7 and creates threats on the king's flank. The more so, since on 13.f5 ♘f4 14.♕g4, then 14...♕d6 looks very pleasant for Black.

However, a clear plan of counterplay now appears for Black.

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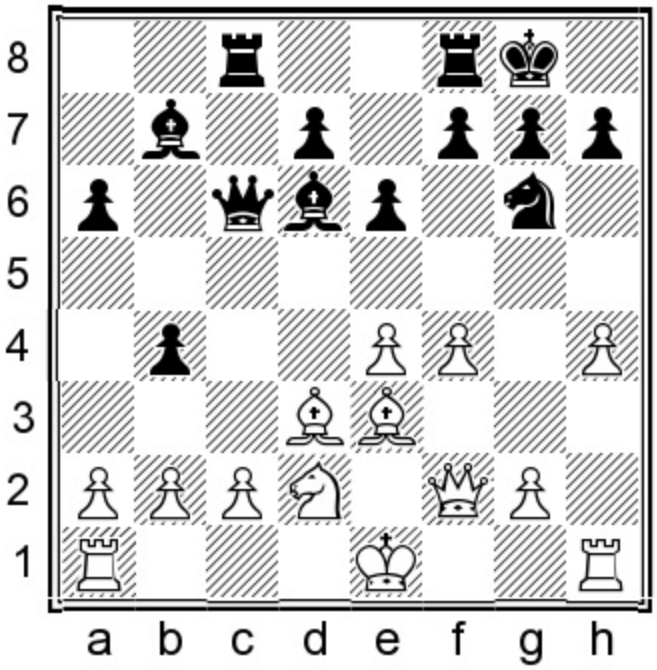
13...♗d6 14.♗e3

Clearly, there is no danger for Black in 14.♗xg7 ♘xf4! 15.♗xh8 ♘xd3† 16.cxd3 ♕c1†.

Since 14.g3 is too risky, while on 14.e5 unpleasant is 14...♗e7 with the threat of ...♗h4, White's last move is essentially forced.

14...0-0 15.♘d2 ♖ac8 16.h4

Here I felt that I should win the game. White is taking too many obligations upon himself.



16...♕c7

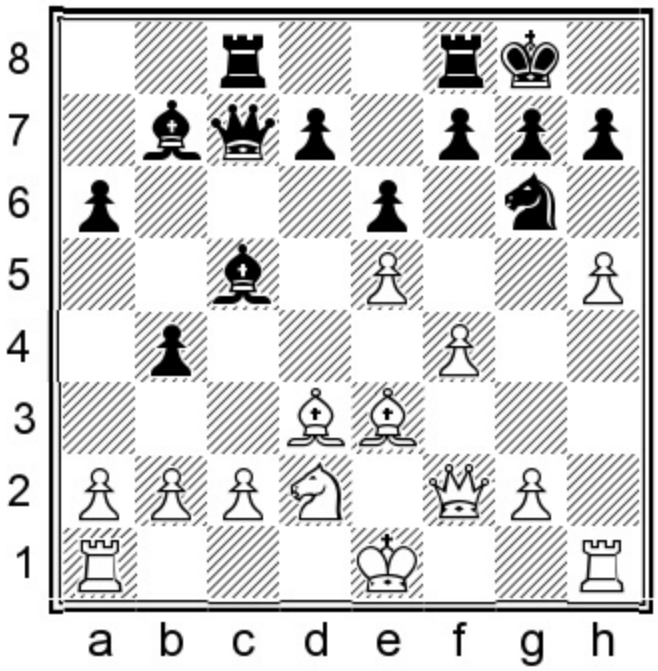
Tempting appears 16...e5 17.g3 exf4 18.gxf4, but the move played seemed to me to be more

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flexible and consistent.

Since 17.f5 is now impossible on account of 17...♗g3, White is practically forced to play either 17.g3 or 17.e5, after which the strength of the b7-bishop is significantly increased.

17.e5 ♗c5 18.h5

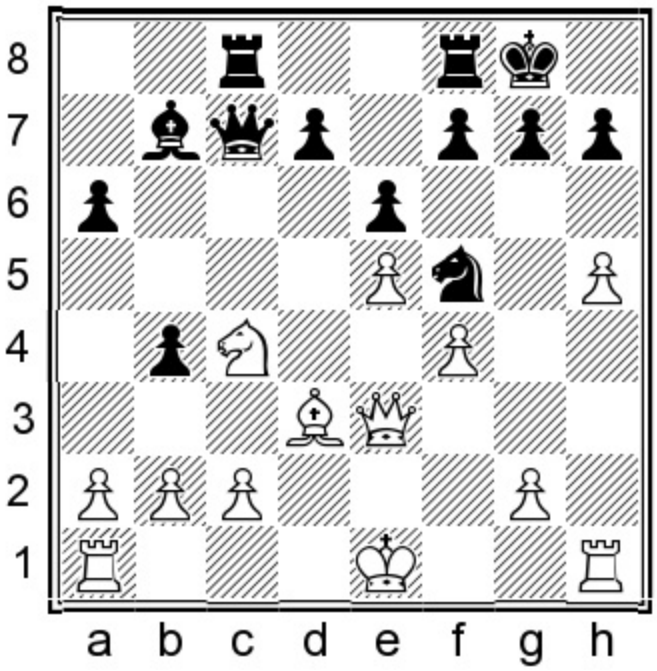


18...♗xe3 19.♕xe3 ♘e7

I was convinced that I had managed to achieve a noticeable advantage. On the natural 20.0-0-0 I intended to play 20...♘d5 with strong threats (...♕a5 and ...♘c3, or ...b4-b3 and ...♘b4).

20.♘c4 ♘f5

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21.♕d2

Instead of this, 21.♗xf5 was possible. Although after 21...♕xc4 the play develops quite pleasantly for Black, I would have preferred in this case 21...exf5 and on 22.♘d6 would have sacrificed the exchange with 22...♕xc2 (after 23.♘xc8 ♖xc8 Black has more than sufficient compensation, while on 23.♘xb7 there follows simply 23...♕xg2).

What is there to do; the Sicilian demands large-scale play!

21...♗d5 22.♘e3 ♘xe3 23.♕xe3 ♕c5

Since after the exchange of queens (in connection with the undermining ...f7-f6 and subsequent pressure on the opponent's weak pawns) Black's opening strategy would have been completely justified, Lutikov naturally moves the queen away.

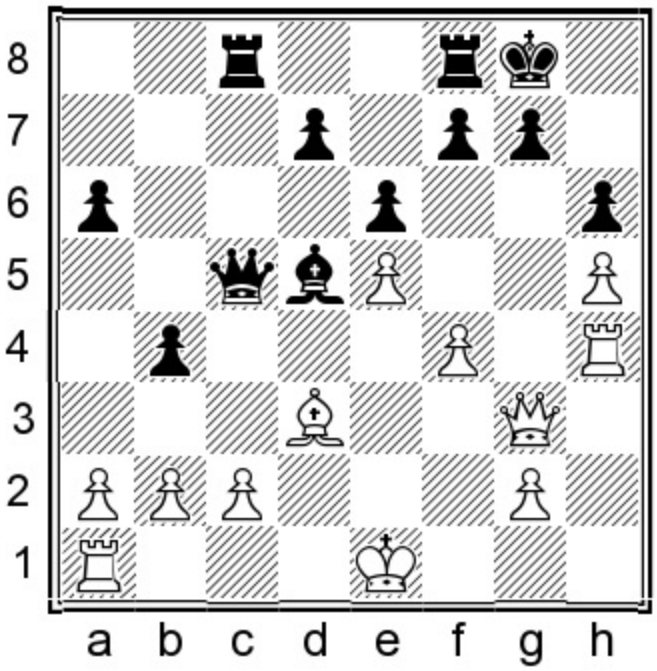
24.♕g3

Less risky was 24.♕d2.

24...h6 25.♖h4

A key moment. I saw very well that after 25...♔h8 and 26...♖g8, in connection with the subsequent ...♕d4, Black achieves a virtually decisive advantage (the undermining ...d7-d6; in some variations the a2-pawn is hanging; the possession of the c-file). But completely on impulse I gave a check, considering that to force the king out into the centre is always good. However, the matter proves to be considerably more complicated.

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25...♕g1†

After this move the game loses its strategic completeness, but gains in beauty, and therefore I have no regrets...

26.♔d2

The game enters a phase of boundless complications, the ultimate consequences of which were impossible to foresee.

After the game I learned that many masters criticized White for 26.♔d2. If, after the reckless check on g1, Lutikov had moved his king to e2 – they said – Stein would have immediately gone through to the Interzonal. If it can at least to some extent console my opponent, then after the move of the king to the neighbouring square I at any rate could have given perpetual check: 26.♔e2 ♖xc2† 27.♗xc2 ♗c4† 28.♔d2 ♕d4† 29.♔c1 ♕g1† At the moment I am not able to give an exhaustive analysis.

[*Translator's note*: Subsequently, Taimanov indicated the following lines: 26.♔e2 ♖xc2† 27.♗xc2 ♗c4† 28.♔d2 (28.♗d3? ♗xd3† 29.♔xd3 ♕xa1; 28.♔f3? ♕xa1 29.♖g4 ♕f1† 30.♔e3 ♕e2†) 28...♕d4† 29.♔c1 ♕g1† 30.♔d2 (30.♗d1?! ♖c8) 30...♕d4† with a draw. However, as he pointed out, "On general considerations, the move of the white king to d2 is safer, and it is not surprising that Lutikov, without hesitation, preferred this."]

26...♕d4

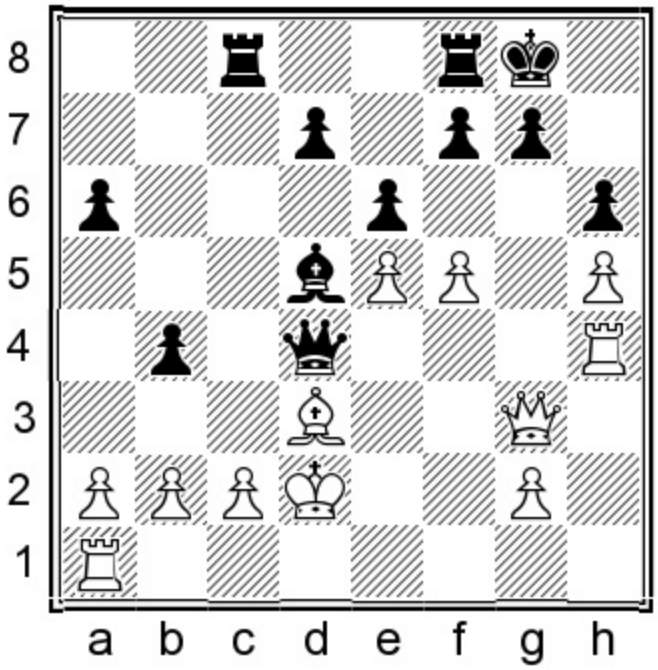
Clearly, after 26...♕xa1 27.♖g4 White gives mate, while also after 26...♕xg2† 27.♕xg2 ♗xg2 28.♖g1 ♗d5 29.♖hg4 his threats are irresistible.

27.f5

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Lutikov finds the best move.

After the obvious 27.♖g4, then 27...♗e4 gives Black victory: 28.♖xg7† ♔h8, and against the numerous threats (first and foremost ...♖g8 – along the very same file where White had been attacking!) there is no defence.



27...♖xc2†! 28.♔xc2 b3†

Clearly insufficient is 28...♖c8† 29.♔d1 ♕xb2 30.♖b1.

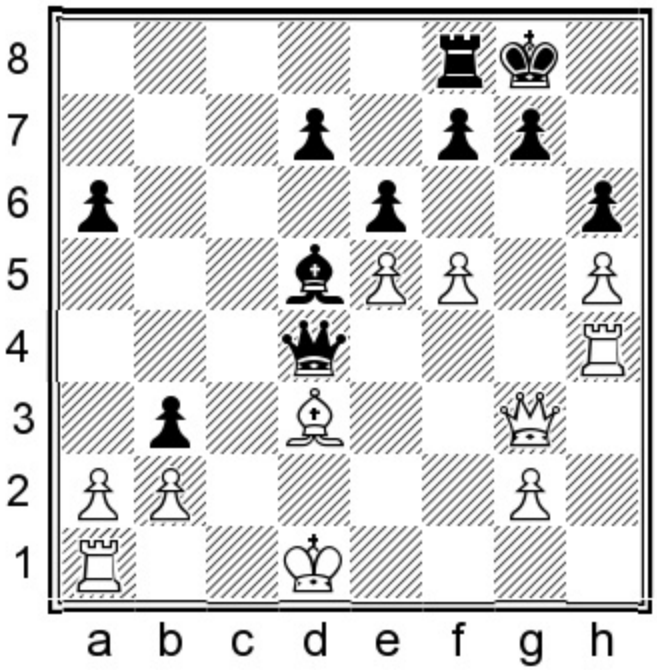
All of Black's subsequent play is based on the inclusion of the b-pawn.

29.♔d1

During the game I believed that this was the only move, while 29.axb3 was impossible in view of 29...♗xb3†. Now it seems to me that it was precisely in this move that White's final drawing chance lay: 30.♔d2 ♕xb2† 31.♔e3 ♕xa1 32.f6 ♕g1† 33.♔d2 ♕d1†, and here I give perpetual check.

[*Translator's note*: Subsequently, it was pointed out by Ken Neat that after 29.axb3 ♗xb3† 30.♔d2 Black does not in fact have perpetual check: 30...♕xb2† 31.♔e3 ♕xa1 32.f6 ♕c1† (or 32...♕g1† 33.♔e2!) 33.♔f2 ♕d2† 34.♗e2! (34...♕g5 35.♖g4 etc.) "To my good fortune, this possibility was not exploited by Lutikov, and the struggle in the game proceeded along altogether different lines." (Taimanov).]

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29...♕g1† 30.♕e1 ♕xg2 31.♕f1

On 31.♖f4 I was thinking not so much of 31...♕xb2 as of 31...♖c8.

31...♗f3†

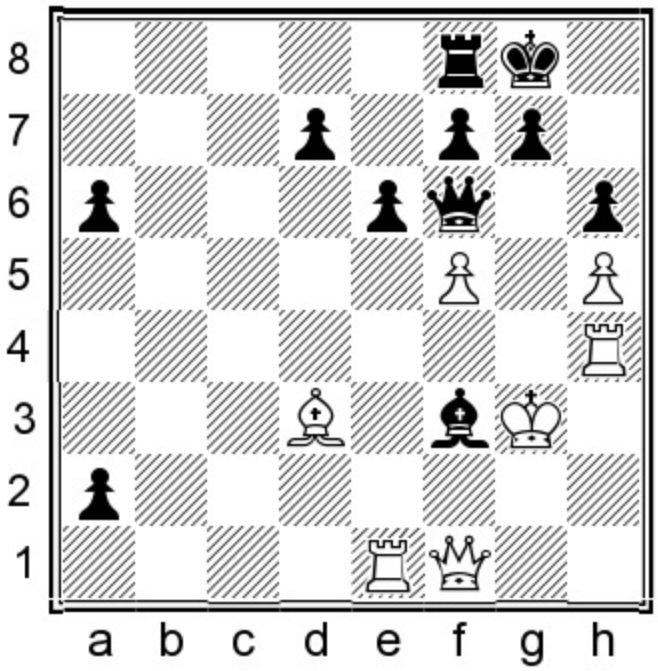
An important intermediate move – the pawn on e5 will, a little later, be taken with check.

32.♔e1 ♕xb2

The following is virtually forced.

33.♖b1 ♕xe5† 34.♔f2 bxa2 35.♖e1 ♕f6 36.♔g3

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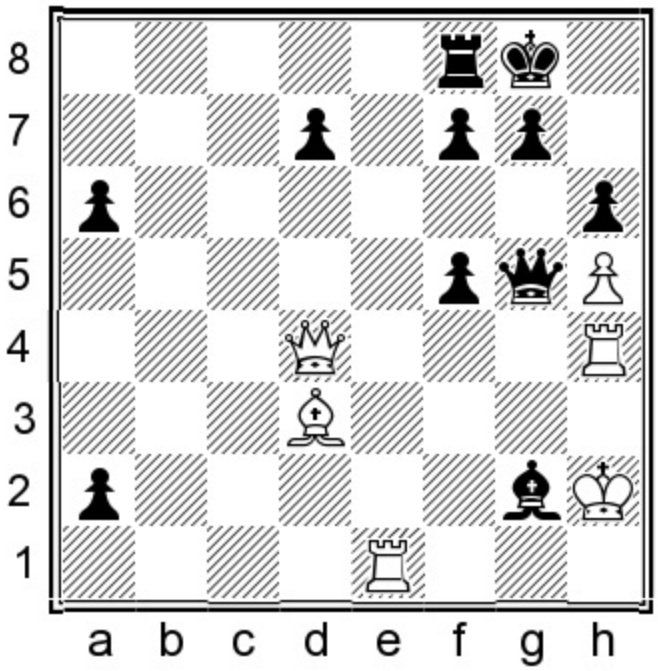
36...♗g2!

The idea of overloading!

37.♕g1 exf5

I confess that this quiet move in such a tense position appealed to me. Although the pawn chain is broken up, control is taken over the squares g4 and e4.

38.♕d4 ♕g5† 39.♔h2



39...♗e4!

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After the idea of overloading – that of interference.

40.♖hxe4 fxe4 41.♕xe4

Here I sealed the move 41...♕xh5† and got ready for night-time analysis. However, Lutikov decided to spare me the additional effort; White resigned.

0–1

Anatoly Karpov – Mark Taimanov

39th USSR Championship (1), Leningrad 1971

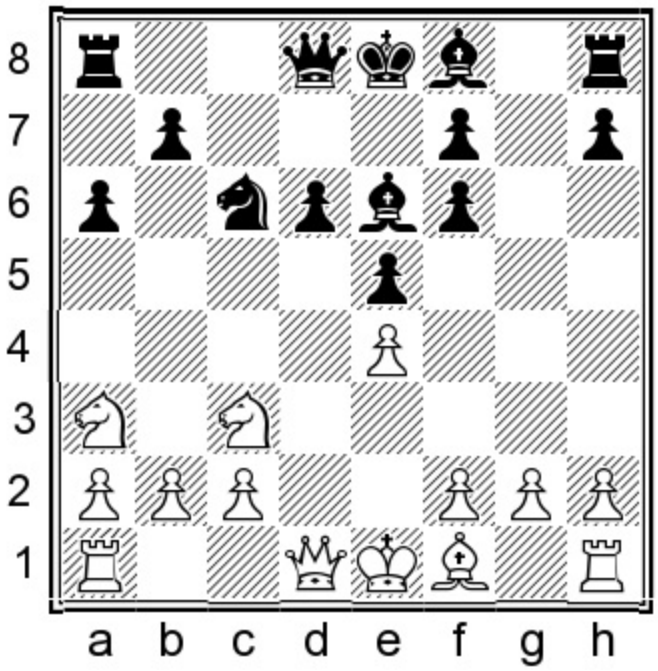
Sicilian Defence

Annotations by S.A. Furman, from *Shakhmaty v SSSR* (No. 12, 1971).

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6

Taimanov is characterized by an enviable opening consistency, which gives him the possibility of thoroughly studying the chosen variations. The negative side of such tactics consists in the fact that it is easier for the opponent to prepare for the game.

5.♘b5 d6 6.♗f4 e5 7.♗e3 ♘f6 8.♗g5 ♗e6 9.♘1c3 a6 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘a3



This position was encountered in two games from the Candidates matches: Fischer – Taimanov, Vancouver (6) 1971, and Fischer – Petrosian, Buenos Aires (1) 1971. In the first there followed 11...♘d4 12.♘c4 f5 13.exf5 ♘xf5 14.♗d3 ♖c8 15.♗xf5 ♖xc4 16.♗xe6 fxe6 17.♕e2, and White gained an advantage.

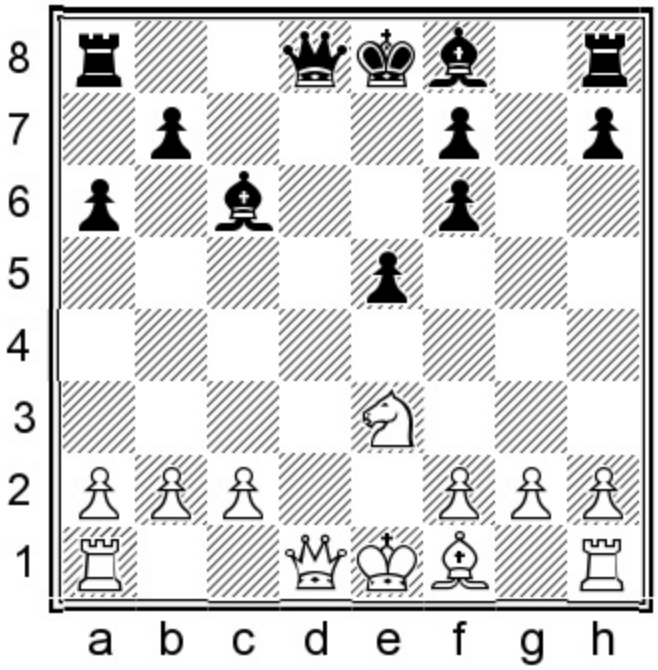
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For his match with Fischer, Petrosian had prepared the sharp move 11...d5. However, the present game was played before the Petrosian – Fischer match.

11...♘e7

A new continuation. Black exchanges the weak d6-pawn and rids himself of the fundamental defect of his position.

12.♘c4 d5 13.exd5 ♘xd5 14.♘xd5 ♗xd5 15.♘e3 ♗c6



16.♗c4

A correct decision.

After the sharp 16.♕h5 ♕a5† 17.c3 0-0-0 Black obtains excellent counterplay.

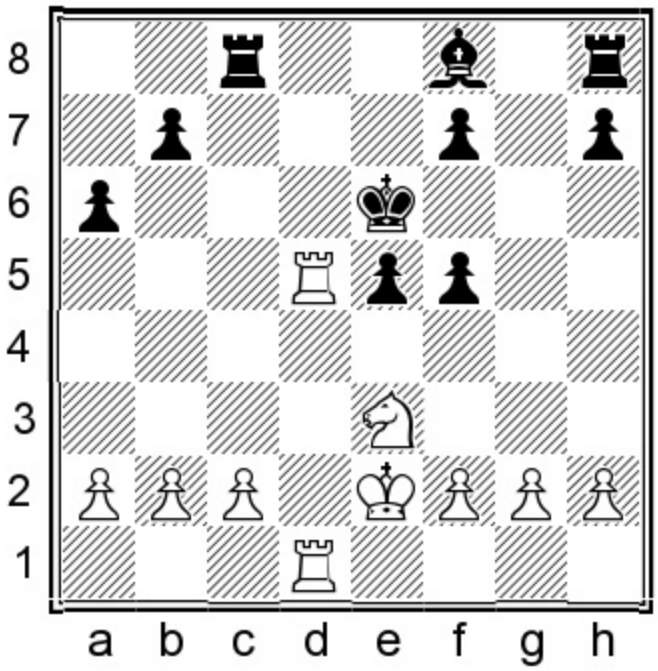
16...♕xd1† 17.♖xd1 ♖c8 18.♗d5 ♗xd5 19.♖xd5

Despite the novelty that was employed, Black has all the same not managed to completely equalize the position. If White succeeds in blocking the opponent's doubled pawns on the f-file, he will achieve a serious advantage.

19...♔e7 20.♔e2 ♔e6 21.♖hd1 f5

Threatening 22...f4 with an attack on the c2-pawn, while after 22.c3 f4 Black can boldly look to the future – the knight at e3 would have no convenient retreat square.

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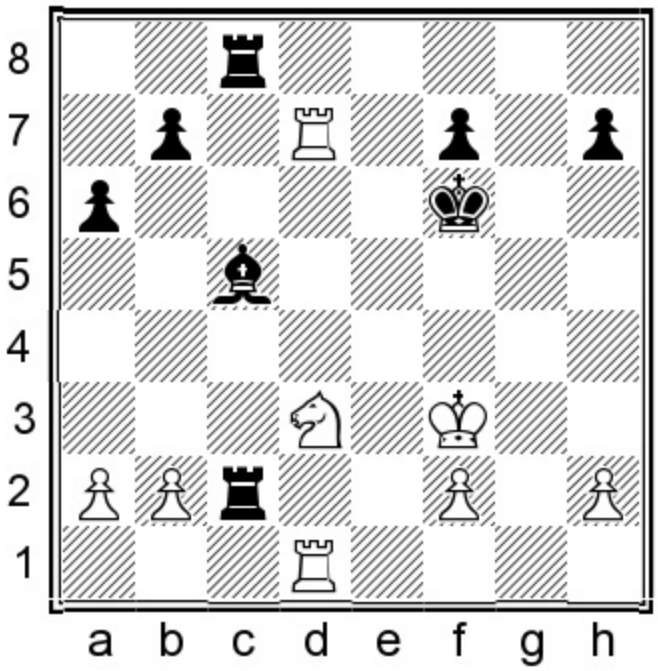
22.g3!

It is very important for White to retain the knight on the e3-square. After the restrained 22...f6 23.c3 there is a positional advantage on his side. However, passive defence is not to Taimanov's taste.

22...f4 23.gxf4 exf4 24.♘g2 ♖xc2† 25.♔f3 ♗c5

25...♖xb2 was very dangerous in view of 26.♘xf4† ♔f6 27.♖e1 with the threat of 28.♘h5†.

26.♘xf4† ♔f6 27.♘d3 ♖c8 28.♖d7



28...b5

This natural-looking move is a decisive mistake. Better is 28...b6, and the defended position of

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the bishop at c5 permits Black in many variations to successfully defend the kingside pawns.

29.♖e1 ♔g7 30.♖e4 ♖c4

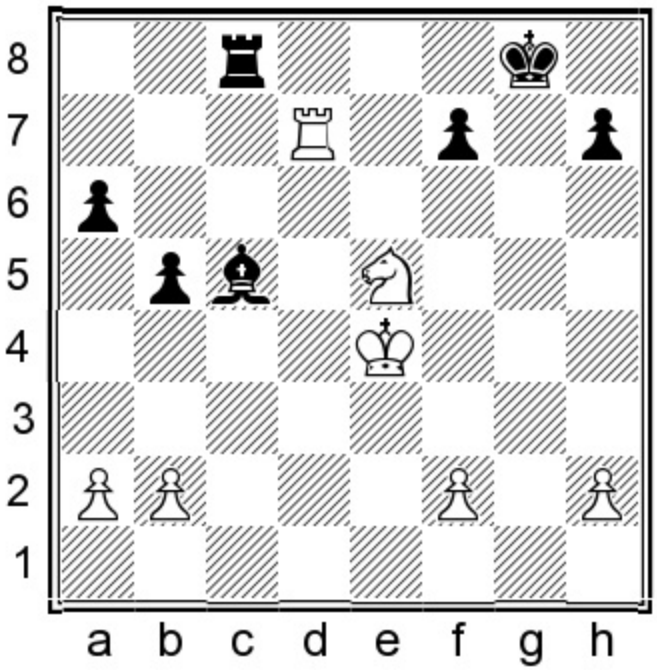
With the pawn at b6, 30...♖c6 would be possible. Now, however, on this move there would have followed 31.♖f4 ♖f6 32.♖xf6 ♔xf6 33.♖c7 winning a piece.

31.♘e5

The most accurate.

After 31.♖xc4 bxc4 32.♘e5 ♔f6 Black obtains reasonable counter-chances.

31...♖xe4 32.♔xe4 ♔g8



33.f4

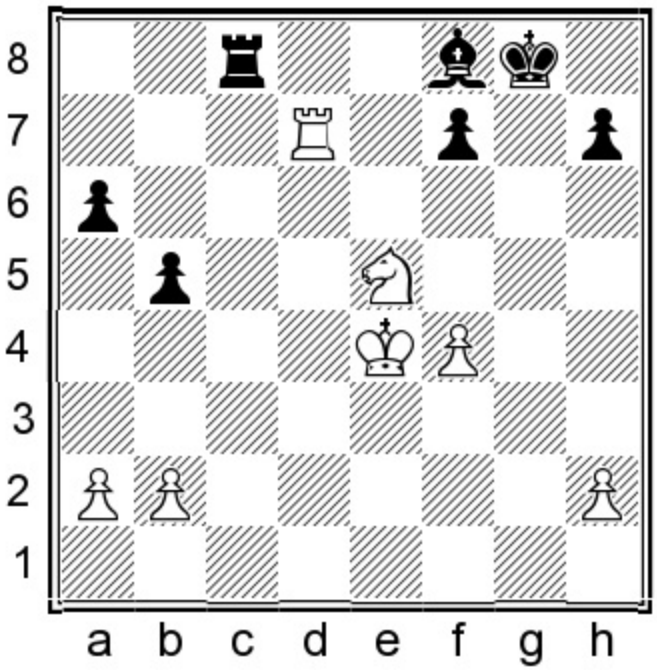
White is not tempted by the immediate win of a pawn. In the case of 33.♖xf7 ♗d6 there would have been drawing chances for Black in the rook endgame.

33...♗f8

Taimanov again seeks counter-chances.

The passive defence 33...♖f8 is altogether without prospects for Black.

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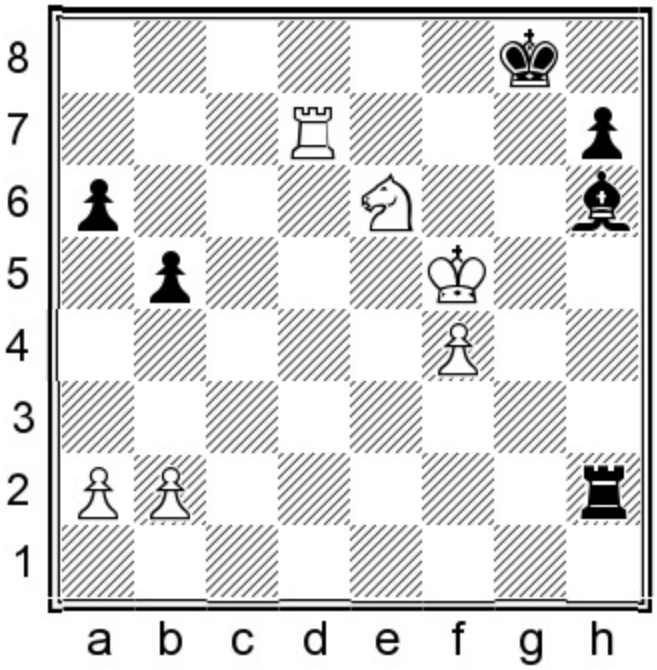
34.♘xf7 ♖c2 35.♘g5 ♗h6

There was the threat of 36.♖d8 followed by 37.♘e6.

36.♘e6 ♖xh2

More tenacious is 36...♖xb2 37.♔f5 ♗xf4 38.♔xf4 ♖xh2 39.♖g7† ♔h8 40.♖a7, and so on as in the game. With this move order White is deprived of the possibility examined in the note at the 38th move.

37.♔f5



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37...♗xf4

Black is forced to give up the bishop, since 38.♔f6 is threatened, while if this move is prevented with 37...♖g2, the game is decided by 38.♖d8† ♔f7 39.♖h8.

38.♔xf4

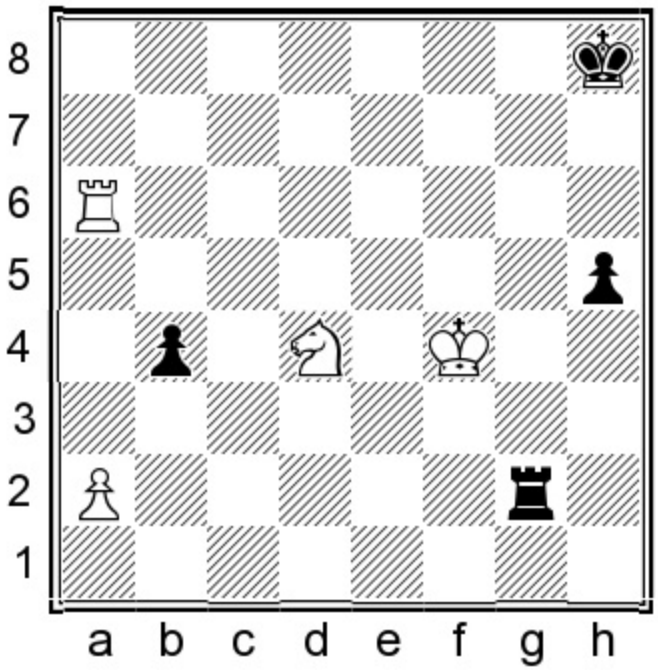
Karpov lets slip the possibility of concluding the game: 38.♘xf4 ♖xb2 39.♔f6 h6 40.♖g7† ♔f8 41.♘e6† ♔e8 42.♖e7#

38...♖xb2 39.♖g7† ♔h8 40.♖a7 h5 41.♖xa6 b4

Although White has an extra piece, the achievement of the win is complicated by Black's constant threat to exchange the sole white pawn.

42.♘d4 ♖g2

In this position the game was adjourned. Karpov did not seal the best move. This gave Taimanov the chance, with accurate defence, to create the maximum difficulties for the opponent in the realization of the advantage.



43.♔f3

Stronger is 43.♘f5!, preventing the advance of the h-pawn and intending to pass with the king via e5 or g5 to f6.

43...♖d2 44.♔e3 ♖b2

Black adheres to waiting tactics, permitting the opponent to correct his mistake.

Significantly more tenacious was 44...♖h2, in order to then advance the h-pawn. Depending on circumstances, the white king would direct itself either to the kingside or to its passed pawn.

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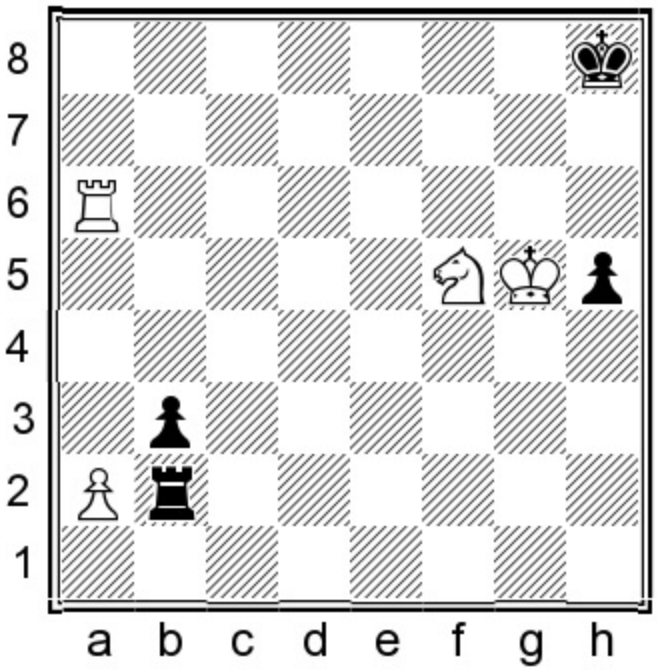
Greater defensive chances were also retained by 44...♖g2. In both cases the win for White would be associated with very serious difficulties.

45.♔f4 ♖d2 46.♘f5 ♖b2

The threat of the pawn exchange is no longer real. White has time to first create mating threats.

Black retained saving chances only with 46...♔g8.

47.♔g5 b3



48.♖h6†! ♔g8 49.♔f6!

Black resigned.

1–0

Robert James Fischer – Tigran Petrosian

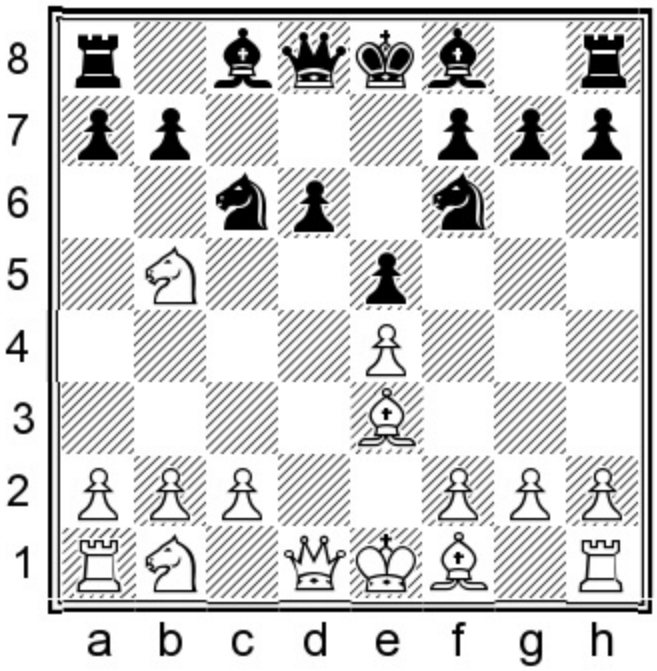
Candidates final (1), Buenos Aires 1971

Sicilian Defence

Annotations by S.A. Furman and V.L. Korchnoi, from *'64'* (No. 41, 1971).

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♘xd4 ♘c6 5.♘b5 d6 6.♗f4 e5 7.♗e3 ♘f6

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8.♗g5

This variation, which Fischer has a liking for, has already brought him several important victories, in particular in the match versus Taimanov in the 2nd and 6th games.

We note that if, to prevent the dangerous pin on the f6-knight, Black plays first 7...a6, then after 8.♘5c3 ♘f6 9.♗c4 ♗e7 10.♘d5 White has a small but stable advantage, Bronstein – Furman, Tallinn 1971.

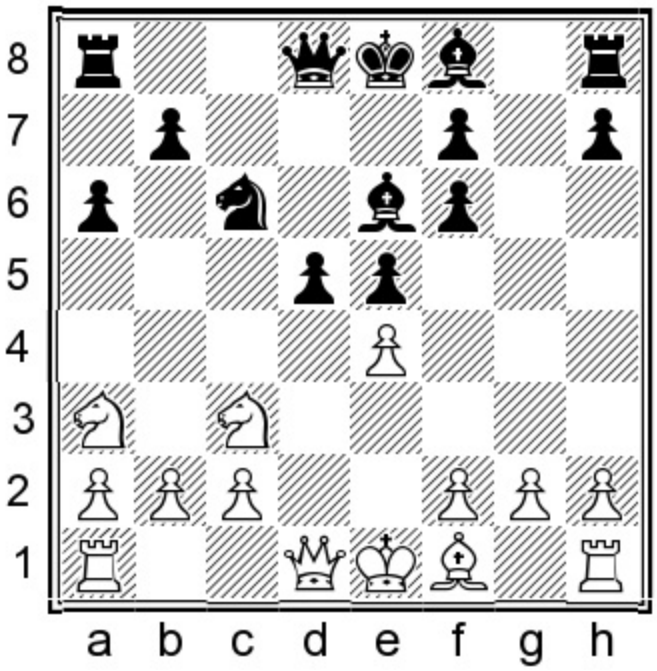
8...♗e6

This is stronger than 8...♕a5† 9.♕d2 ♘xe4 10.♕xa5 ♘xa5 11.♗e3 Fischer – Taimanov, Vancouver (2) 1971, or 8...a6 9.♗xf6 gxf6 10.♘5c3 f5 11.♕h5.

9.♘1c3 a6 10.♗xf6 gxf6 11.♘a3 d5!

In our view this move, which had not been previously played, changes the assessment of the entire variation. It had been analysed by Petrosian long before the match and then, a month ago, the decision was taken to employ this variation in one of the very first games of the match. The decision to do so was correct, the more so given the appearance, on the eve of the match, of an issue of the Riga magazine *Shakhmaty* in which the master Vītoliņš mentions the move 11...d5 as meriting attention.

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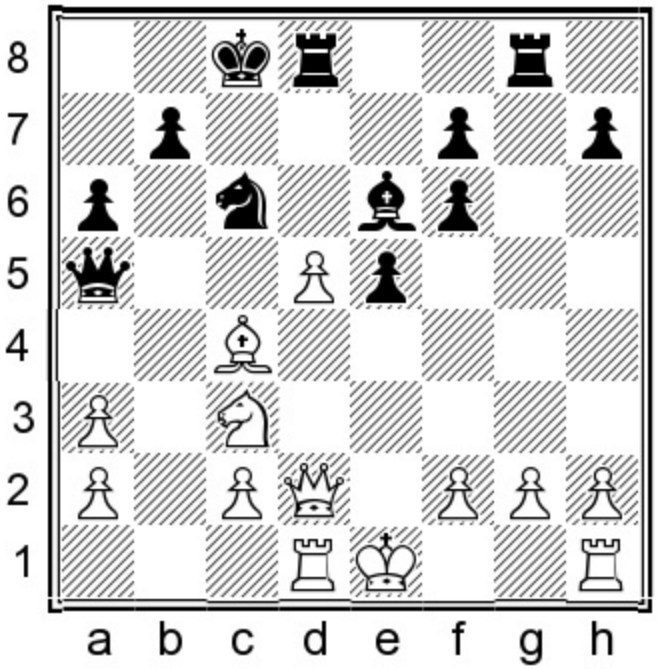
12.exd5

Also after 12.♘xd5 ♗xa3 13.bxa3 ♕a5† 14.♕d2 ♕xd2† 15.♔xd2 0-0-0 followed by 16...f5 Black has no difficulties.

12...♗xa3 13.bxa3 ♕a5 14.♕d2 0-0-0 15.♗c4 ♖hg8

For the sacrificed pawn Black has a great advantage in development; White's defence involves no little difficulty since the natural 16.0-0 will not do in view of 16...♗h3.

16.♖d1!



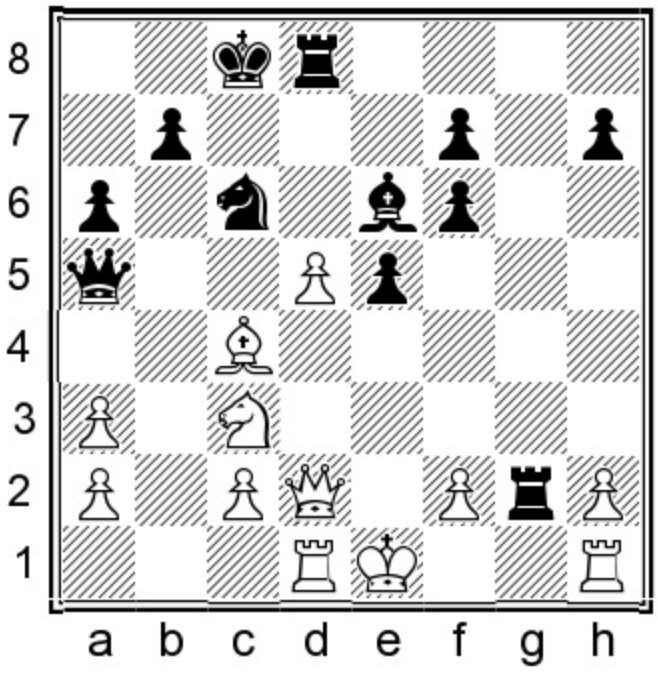
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16...♗f5

Having seemingly been in a fighting mood at the start of the game, from this point Petrosian decided to play for a draw.

Clearly, no good is 16...♖g4, hoping for 17.♗b3? ♖d4 18.♕e3 ♗xd5, on account of 17.♗d3 and in order to save the piece Black has to give up the exchange by 17...♖xd5 18.♘xd5 ♕xd5 19.f3, without sufficient compensation.

It is difficult to explain why the ex-World Champion refrained from the obvious 16...♖xg2.

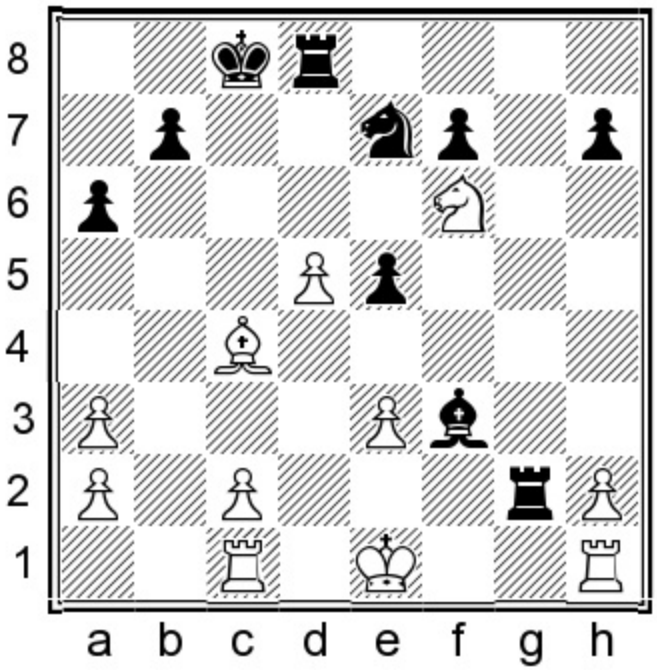


In this case failing to bring White success is the attempt to win a piece with 17.♕e3 ♘d4 18.♔f1 ♘xc2 19.♕f3 (19.♕d3 ♖g4; 19.♕d2 ♗h3) 19...♖xf2†! with a winning attack for Black.

While on 17.♘e4 possible was the coldblooded 17...♖g6, for example 18.♕xa5 ♘xa5 19.dxe6 ♘xc4 20.exf7 ♖f8 21.♖d5 b6, and the outwardly more active 17...♗g4 (18.♕xa5 ♘xa5 19.♗e2 ♗xe2 20.♔xe2 ♖g6 21.♘g3 ♘c4), in both cases with approximately level chances in the endgame.

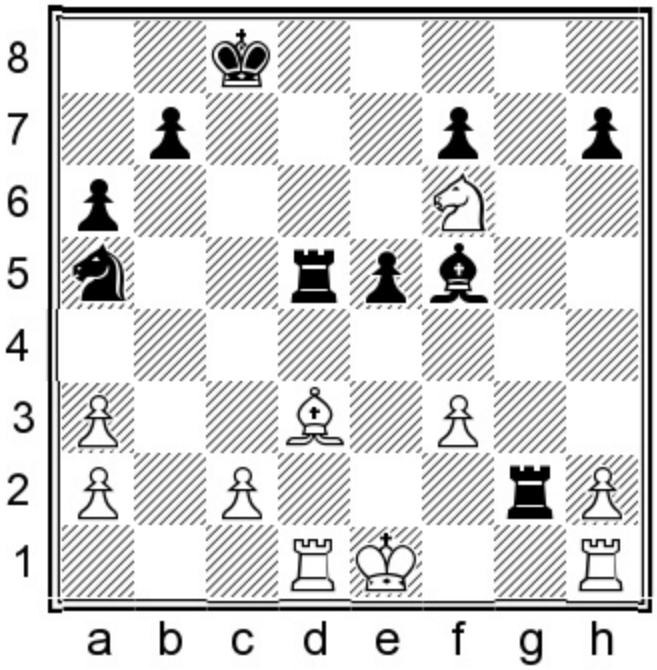
Finally, after 17.♘e4, the move 17...♕b6!? was suggested after the game by Petrosian's trainers. 18...♗g4 or 18...♘d4 are threatened, and therefore the move 18.♕e3 is forced and, since after 18...♘d4 19.♔f1 Black would have to give up material without sufficient compensation, for example, 19...♗g4 20.♔xg2 ♗f3† 21.♕xf3 ♘xf3 22.♔xf3 f5 23.♘d2!, an endgame once again arises:18...♕xe3† 19.fxe3 ♗g4! 20.♖c1! ♗f3 21.♘xf6 ♘e7!

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With the threats of ...e5-e4, ...♖g6 and ...♖d6. White, despite his material advantage, is faced with a struggle for a draw.

We note that also deserving attention is the manoeuvre 16...♗g4 17.f3 ♗f5, preventing both White's castling and the attempt to exchange light-squared bishops with 18.♗d3. Probably, White would have defended with 18.♘e4 ♖xg2 19.♕xa5 ♘xa5 20.♗d3 ♖xd5 21.♘xf6.



After 21...♗xd3 22.♘xd5 ♖e2† a draw is obtained.

But Black could without great risk play for a win: 21...♖xd3! 22.cxd3 ♖xa2 etc.

[*Translator's note*: The present game is examined in great detail by Jan Timman in his book *The Art of Chess Analysis* (R.H.M. Press, 1980). He points out that on 16...♖xg2 17.♕e3 ♘d4 18.♔f1 there is

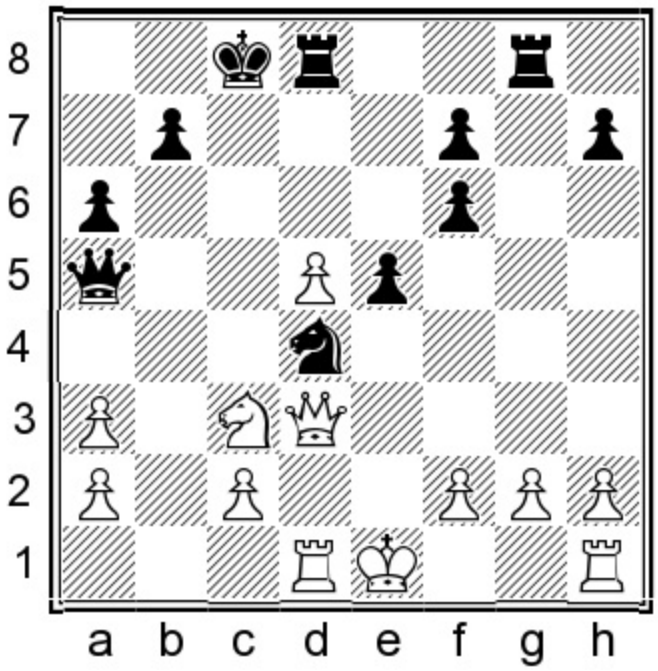
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the continuation 18...♗g4!, which he analyses to a win; the main variation is 19.♔xg2 ♗f3† 20.♔h3 ♕c7! 21.♖xd4 ♕d7† 22.♔g3 (22.♔h4 ♕f5) 22...♗xh1 etc. He therefore considers that 17.♘e4 is forced, but that even here after 17...♕b6 18.♕e3 (18.♕c3 ♗f5) 18...♕xe3† 19.fxe3 ♗g4 followed by 20...♗f3 Black gains a decisive endgame advantage. In general, he considers the position after 16...♖xg2 to be winning for Black.]

17.♗d3 ♗xd3

The move 17...♘d4 would have led, via a transposition of moves, to the position in the game: 18.♗xf5† ♘xf5 19.♕d3 ♘d4, since 19...♘h4 20.g3 e4 21.♕c4† ♔b8 22.♕b4! is hardly favourable for Black (22...♕xb4 23.axb4 ♖c8 24.♘xe4 ♖ge8 25.gxh4 ♖xe4† 26.♔d2).

18.♕xd3 ♘d4



19.0-0 ♔b8 20.♔h1

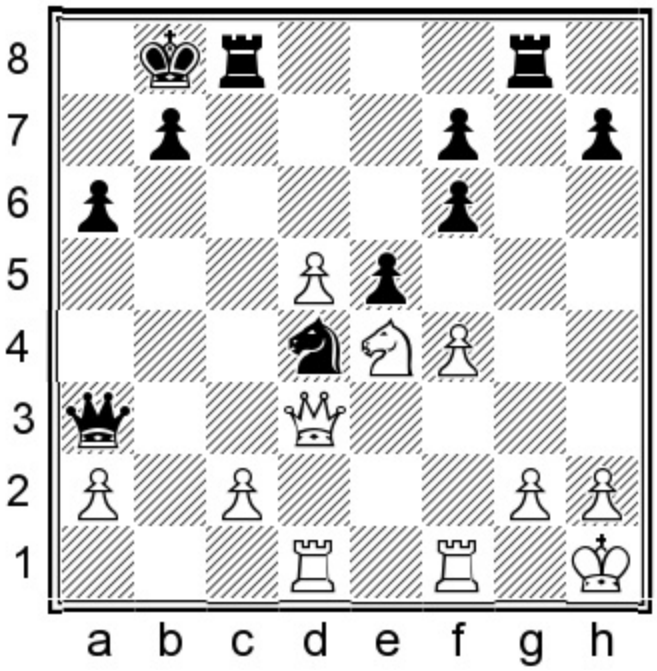
20...♕xc3 was threatened.

20...♕xa3

The other possibility, 20...♖c8 21.♘e4 ♕xd5 22.c3 f5 23.♘g3 f4 24.cxd4 fxg3 25.fxg3 e4 26.♕b3 or 25...exd4 26.♕xh7, also fails to secure genuine equality – after all, White has an extra pawn...

21.f4 ♖c8 22.♘e4

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22...♕xd3

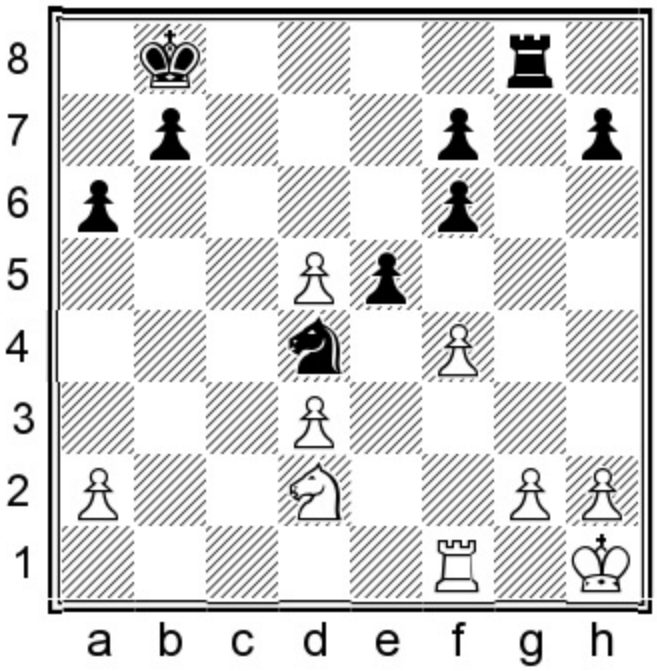
Initially it seemed to us that stronger was 22...♕xa2; in the case of 23.♘xf6 Black with the unexpected 23...♖xg2! seizes the initiative and forces the opponent to make a draw (24.♘d7† ♔a7 25.fxe5 ♖cxc2 26.♕xd4† ♔a8 27.♘b6†), but White would have played 23.♖d2! ♖xc2 24.♖xc2 ♘xc2 25.♕e2!; despite the material advantage, it is difficult for Black to defend – the passed d-pawn is very strong, while the f6-pawn is lost.

23.cxd3 ♖c2 24.♖d2!

Black's actively-placed rook must be exchanged, otherwise after 24.g3 ♖xa2 25.♘xf6 ♖c8! it would have been united with the other one.

24...♖xd2 25.♘xd2

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The position has been simplified; the mutual pawn weaknesses, it seems, testify to the complete equalization of the chances and a rapid draw.

But the first impression is deceptive – White is first to proceed with an attack on the opponent's weaknesses on the king's flank. On 25...♖d8 unpleasant is 26.fxe5, as is 26.♘e4, in both cases winning material; instead 25...♖e8 has the idea after 26.♘e4 of playing 26...exf4 27.♘xf6 ♖e2 28.♘xh7 f3! 29.gxf3 ♖xa2, and the black pieces display great activity, but strong is 26.f5 followed by 27.♘e4.

25...f5!

A difficult move, unquestionably the best in this position.

26.fxe5 ♖e8 27.♖e1

Bad, of course, is 27.♘c4? b5 and Black, regaining the pawn, gains the advantage.

27...♘c2 28.♖e2 ♘d4 29.♖e3 ♘c2

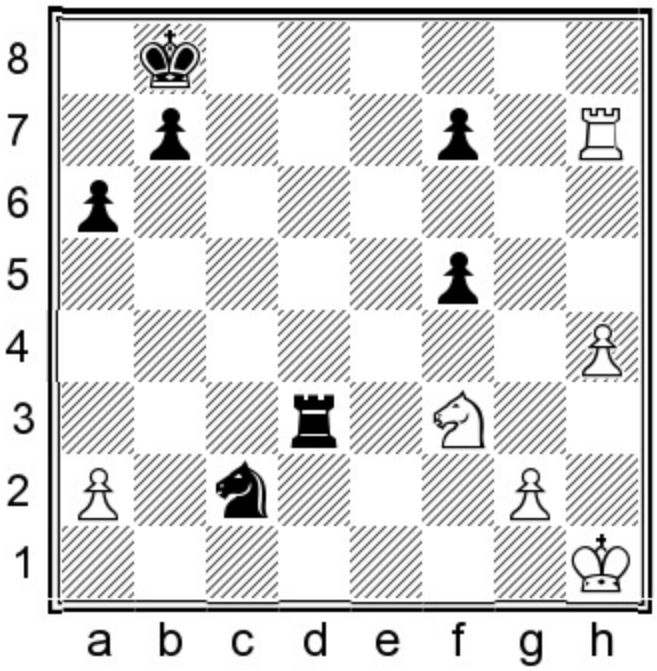
Here Petrosian offered a draw, as the course of the game shows, prematurely – to achieve equality accurate play is still required of Black.

30.♖h3 ♖xe5 31.♘f3 ♖xd5 32.♖xh7 ♖xd3

[*Translator's note*: Timman considers that the text move is possibly a decisive mistake, and that Black should instead mobilize his queenside pawns with 32...b5. He cites a possible variation: 33.h4 a5 34.h5 b4 35.♖xf7 a4 36.h6 ♖d6 37.h7 ♖h6† 38.♔g1 b3 39.axb3 a3, and White is forced to repeat moves.]

33.h4

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33...♘e3?

In a relatively simple position Petrosian, experiencing a shortage of time for thought, underestimates the danger of the passed h-pawn and loses quickly.

After 33...♘d4 the game would have ended in a draw: 34.♘e5 ♖e3 35.♘xf7 f4 36.h5 f3 37.gxf3 ♘xf3 38.♔g2 ♘h4† 39.♔f2 ♖f3† 40.♔e2 ♖f6 41.h6 ♘f5, and White cannot strengthen his position.

The exchange on d4: 33...♘d4 34.♘xd4 ♖xd4 35.♔h2 is also insufficient for the win, for example, 35...f6 36.♔g3 (36.♔h3 ♖d3† 37.g3 f4) 36...♖g4† 37.♔f3 ♖g6, and a draw is not far off.

[*Translator's note*: After 33...♘d4 Timman considers that White should instead play 34.♘g5! (which was apparently indicated by Kholmov) and after 34...f6 35.♘h3 Black's f-pawns get in the way of his pieces.]

34.♖xf7 ♖d1†

This check too is inaccurate.

Deserving attention is 34...♔c8, in order on 35.h5 to continue 35...♖d1† 36.♔h2 ♖d7!, aiming at the exchange of rooks. The tactical basis for the possibility of the exchange is the fact that with the position of the king at h2 there is not the move h5-h6 on account of ...♘g4†; by winning a tempo Black is in time to bring his king within the 'square' of the pawn, and he has good chances of salvation.

[*Translator's note*: Timman considers that after 34...♔c8 35.h5 ♖d1† 36.♔h2 ♖d7 37.♖f8† ♖d8 (37...♔c7 38.♔g3) 38.♖xd8† ♔xd8 39.♔g3, "White keeps matters firmly under control."

Interestingly, grandmaster Alexey Suetin – who together with Yuri Averbakh was Petrosian's

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second in Buenos Aires – annotating the present game in *Shakhmaty v SSSR* (No. 1, 1971) considered that Black should have instead continued 34...♖d6! followed by ...a6-a5 and ...b7-b5, creating a passed pawn on the queen's flank, "which should have given Black a draw."]

35.♔h2 ♖a1?

It was still not too late to play 35...♔c8.

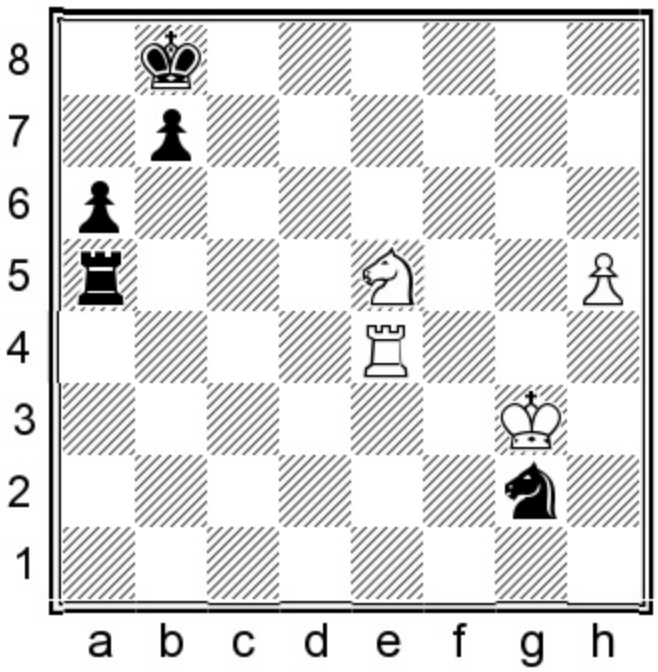
36.h5 f4?

A crude time-trouble blunder.

After 36...♖xa2 37.♔h3 ♖a1 or 37.♖g7 ♘g4† White would still have had to work quite hard in order to win.

Now the struggle is concluded within a few moves.

37.♖xf4 ♖xa2 38.♖e4 ♘xg2 39.♔g3 ♖a5 40.♘e5



Black resigned.

1–0

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Chapter 16

Additional Material



unclear possibilities), RxR 26 Q xR, N-Q5 27 BxN, KPxB (On 27... BPxB, 28 P-B5 is strong)28 Q-N2, Q-B5 (Instead Black could have played the interesting 28...P-Q6 29 BxP, B-KN2 30 Q-K2, B-Q5! 29 B-Q3, B-KN2 30 Q-K2, B-K4 31 P-N3, Q-B6 32 Q-Q2!, Q-N5 (Preventing the threatened 33 N-N5 in view of the reply 33...Q-B5 but nonetheless allowing White an effective stroke.) 33 NxBP!, B-B5 (On 33... BxNP follows 34 RPxB, PxN 35 R-K7 is powerful for White.) 34 Q-K2, QxQ 35 RxQ, PxN 36 PxB, (Here Black exceeded the time limit but his position is hopeless in view of 36...RxP 37 R-K6 or 36...K-N2 37 R-K6, R-B3 38 R-B6!) Comments by TAL.

LARSEN-UHLMANN: Las Palmas, Canary Islands (Spain)

After 8 games, Larsen has 4½ to Uhlmann's 3½.

Larsen started off strong:
White: Bent Larsen, Denmark
Black: Wolfgang Uhlman, East Germany
1 P-KN3, P-Q4 2 B-N2, P-QB3 3 P-Q B4, N-B3 4 N-KB3, P-KN3 5 P-N3, B-N2 6 B-N2, B-N5 7 O-O, O-O 8 P-Q3, BxN 9 BxB, N/1-Q2 10 B-N2, R-K1 11 N-Q2, P-QR4 12 Q-B2, P-K3 13 P-K3, Q-K2 14 P-QR3, N-R4 15 PxP, BxB 16 QxB, BPxP 17 KR-QB1, KR-QB1 18 N-B 3, N/4-B3 19 N-Q4, N-K1 20 P-KR4, N-K4 21 R-B3, R-B4 22 RxR, NxP? 23 RxRP!! NxQ 24 RxR, K-N2 25 B-B1, P-K4 26 N-B3, P-K5 27 N-Q4, N-Q3 28 R-R5, Q-K4 29 R-N1, N-Q6 30 R-Q1, Q-B3 31 BxN, PxB 32 K-N2, N-K5 33 P-B3, P-N3 34 R-R7, NxP 35 KxN, Q-K4ch 36 K-B2, Q-N1 37 R-R4, Q-K7 ch 38 K-K1, QxPch 39 K-Q2, Q-B7ch 40 KxP, P-R4 41 R-R7, P-R5 42 R-B7, Q-N6 43 R-B3, Q-K4 44 R-KN1 (Here Black sealed his move but resigned soon after).

FISCHER-TAIMANOV: Vancouver, Canada

Fischer has won all five games! The 6th is starting as we mail this issue (June 1st). Here is a condensed report:

The Start: Russian growls of protest began as soon as they saw the "TV" room chosen as the playing site - then finally "no" they would go home 1st. A frantic search was made for acceptable quarters - with Taimanov finally agreeing to one, but then Fischer said, no. It took Dr. EUWE to pick the site and set a time for them to show up or forfeit. The Russians won the 1st skirmish as Euwe picked the movie theater at the Student Union Bldg.-which means spectators can watch. Fischer said "Let's play, I'm willing to play anywhere" (with correct lighting, of course).

FIRST GAME:

Larry Evans-Fischer's 20...P-K5 is careless. More prudent is 20... K-R2 to consolidate. Taimanov misses 26 Q-KN3!, K-R2 27 R-B6! followed by R(1)-QB1 & R-B7 to wrest the advantage Game No. 1 King's Indian Defense
White: Mark Taimanov, USSR
Black: Robert Fischer
1 P-Q4, N-KB3 2 P-QB4, P-KN3 3 N-QB3, B-N2 4 P-K4, P-Q3 5 N-B3, O-O 6 B-K2, P-K4 7 O-O, N-B3 8 P-Q5,

N-K2 9 B-Q2 [
added!), N-K1
PxP 12 N-KN5,
the loss of a
PxB, Q-B1 15
17 QxP, N-B3
xP 20 KR-Q1,
4, P-Q4 23 Px
-Q4 (If 25 N-
RxB and the W
, Q-Q2 26 Q-K
6-R6, R-N3 29
BxRP, QxRch 3
BxPch, K-B2 3
N8 34 RxR, Rx
Q-Q3ch 37 P-N
NxP, QxQ 40 B
Adjourned
41 B-N4 (seal
White Resigns
With 41...N
consumed 3 ho
1 hour and 55
SECOND GAME
Fischer with
perts said it
journment - a
could make no
ly demanded.
ticism for no
Taimanov is c
by refusing t
lost.
A proposal
that if Fisch
this 2nd game
third (which
Fischer refus
2nd game.
THIRD GAME:
White: Mark T
Black: Robert

Chess Digest Newsletter June 1971

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Mark Taimanov – Brief Biographical Details (pre-1971)

Mark Evgenevich Taimanov was born on 7th February 1926, in the Ukrainian city of Kharkov, where his parents were studying – his father Evgeny Zakharovich at the Polytechnic Institute, his mother Serafima Ivanovna Ilyina at the Conservatory. Soon the family moved to Leningrad. There, under the influence of his mother, the young Taimanov demonstrated an aptitude for music, attending a school for especially gifted children. At the age of 11 – under the influence of his father, who loved the game – he also became involved with chess at the local Pioneers' Palace. 1

His family did not escape the terrible events of those times – his maternal uncle was arrested and ultimately shot, while his aunt was imprisoned and eventually died in captivity. One of his father's brothers was also arrested and sentenced to eight years in a labour camp. On the outbreak of war in 1941, Taimanov and his father were evacuated to Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan. His mother feared that Mark's infant sister would not survive the trip, and so she elected to stay in the city, not knowing that it was about to be cut off. As a result, she and Mark's two siblings had to endure the dreadful privations of the blockade until their evacuation in March 1942. 2

After returning to the city on the Neva, Taimanov finished music school and entered the Leningrad Conservatory, where he met his future wife and musical partner on the piano, Lyubov Bruk. The pair married at the age of 19. 3

Side-by-side with his musical career, Taimanov's chess went from strength to strength. He made his first breakthrough by finishing 2nd in the semi-final of the 16th USSR Championship in 1947, thereby qualifying for the final in Moscow the following year. In 1949 he shared 1st-2nd with Bondarevsky in the semi-final of the 19th USSR Championship, and in the final his shared 3rd-4th place with Geller – ahead of grandmasters such as Boleslavsky, Kotov and Keres – marked his arrival among the top players in the country. In 1950 he made his international debut at Szczawno-Zdrój and gained the title of International Master; that same year he also undertook a series of concerts across

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the USSR together with his wife. 4

In 1952, at the Interzonal tournament at Saltsjobäden he qualified for the Candidates tournament, thereby becoming an International Grandmaster, and shared 1st-2nd place with Botvinnik in the 20th USSR Championship – though he lost the subsequent play-off match. He made up for this in the 26th Championship, in his home city of Leningrad – after sharing 1st-3rd places with Averbakh and Spassky, he won the play-off match-tournament to take the title of Soviet Champion. Taimanov continued to take top prizes in international tournaments throughout the 1960s.

***Taimanov – Hort**, Wijk aan Zee 1970*

Taimanov experienced a resurgence in form in 1970. In January he took first place in the traditional Hoogovens tournament in Wijk aan Zee, ahead of Hort and Ivkov. In the 'Match of the Century' in Belgrade, he defeated Wolfgang Uhlmann in their mini-match on Board 7 (+2, –1, =1), contributing to the narrow overall victory of the Soviet team. And then, at the end of the year, finishing 5th-6th in the Interzonal tournament in Palma de Mallorca, he qualified for the Candidates matches where he was drawn against Fischer.

Taimanov was renowned for his optimistic outlook, both on the board and away from it. Many years later, he would say:

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I did not mix my two professions, I alternated between the two. As I used to say, when I gave concerts I was taking a rest from chess and when I played chess, I was resting from the piano. As a result, my whole life has been one long holiday! 5

***

Article by Robert Byrne, from the magazine of the U.S. Chess Federation, *Chess Life & Review*, August 1971 6

'Fischer Shuts Out Taimanov, 6–0!'

Bobby Fischer, who has accustomed us all to his extraordinary exploits – winning tournaments by three points, his clean sweep of the United States Championship, 11–0 – has done it again! Who would have imagined that any Challengers Match would ever have been decided by a perfect score, when the participants are to be ranked among the strongest players in the world? If one attempts to explain his fantastic achievement by pointing out that he terrifies his opponents, the explanation falls on its face, since their fear arises from his wonderful playing strength. So we merely return to the fact from which we began.

We can restate what has already been said of him: that his play is remarkably mistake-free, incisive, and devolves from extraordinarily simple, classical themes, such as his exploitation of the superiority of bishop over knight where pawns are distributed on both sides of the board. But it should be taken into account that what really lies behind this astonishing success with pure classical themes is his unusual capacity for creating the positions in which such themes are operative. And that is a secret known, if at all, only to himself.

In this match, his opening preparation, as it so often is, was quite superior to that of his opponent. Taimanov was undoubtedly surprised by the gambit in Game 2 and was bested in the argument concerning the King's Indian Variation of Games 1 and 3. The only openings that were not clearly to Taimanov's disadvantage were the Grünfeld of Game 5 and the Sicilian of Game 6. But by that time he was so punch-drunk that nothing mattered – witness the horrible blunder (after the adjournment!) in Game 5...

"Well, I still have my music." – Taimanov's comment to Fischer after the match.

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On the last Sunday of May 2016, in the premises of the Norm Theater in the University of British Columbia, there was held a competition dedicated to the chess match which took place exactly 45 years ago on that same stage. In 1971, Vancouver hosted the quarter-final match of the contenders for the title of world champion in chess. The future 11th world champion, Bobby Fischer, met one of the strongest Soviet grandmasters, Mark Taimanov. The American chess player was considered to be the favourite, but no one could predict the result of this match in advance: 6–0. Fischer won six games in a row without making a single draw.

The friendly match of 2016 was thematic – Team Fischer and Team Taimanov were formed from Vancouver chess players who wished to celebrate this event.

In February 2016, Mark Taimanov turned 90 years old. Moving away from active tournament practice, the grandmaster has devoted himself to his family and the development of children's chess in St. Petersburg. On the eve of the match, I had a telephone conversation with Mark Evgenievich, asking him to share his memories of the match and Bobby Fischer.

– Good evening, Mark Evgenievich.

– Good evening.

– The legendary match happened 45 years ago when you were 45. This year you celebrated

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your 90th birthday. We can say that now your life divided into two equal parts – before and after the match with Robert Fischer. As you wrote in your book, I was a Victim of Bobby Fischer, this match was not only the greatest disappointment but also became one of the most remarkable events in life.

– Yes, indeed. It was a big sporting failure. Big emotional stress followed, related to harsh criticism by our leaders, who saw in this loss an evil intention: an attempt to discredit our great country. Nevertheless, I recall that match to be one of the most dramatic events in my chess life because I played that match with the great chess player. Despite such a dramatic result, there were interesting games and bright moments.

Fischer himself admitted that the outcome of this match does not correspond in any way to its chess content because the struggle was intense, fascinating and creatively saturated. After the sixth game, according to Fischer's opinion, the result should have been a maximum of 3½–2½ in his favour. The games of this match entered the history of the biggest chess events.

– Speaking about Robert Fischer, I would like to know your opinion about what qualities of this outstanding chess player can be useful to players in the present age of ubiquitous use of computers at all stages of preparation and analysis of games?

– At that time, Fischer found many elements, which even today remain very relevant. For example, a chess clock with the time increment, which significantly brings "justice" to the outcome of the games in time trouble. If earlier it was possible to lose the game, having run out of time one turn before giving a checkmate, now, with such a clock with the addition of a few seconds after each move, such an element of injustice is excluded. This is the first thing.
Also, Fischer predicted the future capabilities of computers to analyse chess openings, which has become a negative side for today. The computer has largely deprived chess players of the need to independently conduct a creative analysis of the opening stage of the game. Now, by clicking the button, you can get the results of any research for two centuries, without applying any creative efforts.

– Do you think that "Fischer Random Chess" has prospects to take a much larger place than it occupies in the modern chess world?

– Of course, computer programs are developing rapidly, and the time will come when all 960 initial positions will be analysed in detail, but for now this is a special trend in the process of the chess game.

– It is known that Fischer read Soviet chess books and magazines. In what language did you communicate during the match – English or Russian?

– No, I do not speak English very well. Surprisingly, I spoke with him in mixed Serbian-Russian. We both went to Yugoslavia for a long time and spoke at a decent level, sufficient to understand each other. For us, the most convenient language was Serbian.

– For Vancouver, your match of 1971 is the brightest page in the chess history of the city. Do

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you have special memories related to our city?

– I can say that I always remember Vancouver with warmth, despite the fact that I had to endure a lot after this match. I recall it as a very pleasant, interesting and hospitable city.

– About your chess career: You went to the match with Bobby Fischer when you already had victories in almost all major competitions: USSR champion; many times champion of Leningrad; as a member of the USSR national team, the winner of the Chess Olympiad and several European Championships; not counting victories in a number of prestigious international tournaments. You repeatedly met at the chessboard with all the strongest grandmasters of the 1950s to the 1970s. Who from these rivals was most uncomfortable for you, or against whom did you play most easily?

– Such dramatic results as in the match with Fischer, with other grandmasters I did not have. I think participating in tournaments and matches that took place in the Soviet Union, I felt at ease and played at my level, which fit into the elite of Soviet chess players.

– You met with world chess champions from Botvinnik to Kasparov and you have six wins under your belt over the strongest chess players of your time. What victory is remembered most of all?

– The most memorable of these games is the victory in the tournament in 1977 in Leningrad over the then world champion Anatoly Karpov.

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Taimanov and Vasiukov in Reykjavik 1968

– You are also known both as a journalist and as a writer: since the 1950s you have been writing for chess publications and publishing books on the theory of chess openings, essays, and memoirs?

– Yes, at some point, a third was added to my two main professions. Maybe I did not achieve such heights in journalism; nevertheless, it was always interesting and fascinating for me. I hope that my work in this field let me introduce readers to chess art. Regarding the book, *Remembering the Most Memorable* (2003), I talk about my creative life, both musical and chess, about meeting the greatest chess players, politicians and outstanding personalities of the 20th century.

I was fortunate enough to be on good terms and for some time to be friends with Che Guevara, who was a big fan of chess. He did a lot for the development of chess in Cuba: tournaments were held, which became a true gem in the international chess calendar for many years. These prestigious tournaments exist even today. My meetings, of course, were largely related to both my favourite professions: chess and music. Thanks to them I travelled around the world with performances, visited 80 countries.

– Recently I talked with one of the strongest chess players in Vancouver, and he highly praised your book, Taimanov's Selected Games, published in 1996 in English. I myself can add that

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your books perfectly combine the analysis of what is happening on the board and a description of the whole atmosphere of what is happening around. Do you use a computer to analyse the games played in the 50-90s, that is, in the "pre-computer" era?

– I can say that I am opposed to such a "rethinking". For many years I have been friends with Garry Kimovich Kasparov, but our points of view diverge on the need to subject games of past years to computer analysis. Kasparov published a series of books called *My Great Predecessors*, where he used computer analysis, which often changes the notion of classical evaluation in individual games of great chess players.

Some of the games that we considered masterpieces, the computer ruthlessly criticized and found options that overthrow these great games from the throne.

I believe that this is equivalent to if the computer intervened in the 5th symphony and said that here Beethoven applied parallel quints, which are not allowed in the theory of classical musical composition. Using such an analysis could destroy our bright sensations and impressions of outstanding masterpieces of musical creativity. It seems to me that from this point of view the overthrow of the great works of chess art, at least, is offensive.

– Very interesting analogy. I have one more question: which photo of the match in 1971 will you recommend using when publishing the interview? Maybe you have in the archive previously unpublished photos?

– I think that the most famous photo of this match, where we both sit at the chessboard, with our hands clasped around our heads, during the sixth and last game [see pages 73 and 152], best reflects the tension in the match.

– It is the photograph that since last year has been decorating one of the walls in the cinema which accommodated that game.

– Yes, I like it. In my personal archive, I have a newspaper with this photo. It is among the photos displayed in the chess academy in St. Petersburg.

– Mark Evgenievich, a few years ago a chess academy for young talents was opened under your leadership. Please, tell me about it. Do you personally communicate with young chess players?

– I do not think that I am well prepared for teaching chess to children. This should be dealt with by people who have significant pedagogical experience. I myself started in a similar circle at six. It was a class for a few children with one enthusiastic teacher. Our school has enough space for several groups. Lectures, simultaneous games, and tournaments for chess players of various levels of training are held. The best coaches are invited, I emphasize, they are "children's trainers".

In the children's school, it is not necessary to grow large grandmasters. It is important to teach children to love chess. My professor of music said: "Love the music and it will reciprocate." The same can be said about chess.

– Thank you for the interview. I hope that this friendly match will be traditional.

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– Good luck!

Konstantin Pyryaev
Telephone conversation, April 2016, Vancouver – St. Petersburg

Translated by Nikita Olechko

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Since the match 50 years ago and since Taimanov wrote this book almost 30 years ago, there have been great advances in chess-playing computer programs, commonly known as engines. Everyone knows this and everyone has adjusted one way or another.

Now, it is quite possible to go through a book like this with a computer program and point out every inaccuracy by the players and the writer. This is by no means pointless; understanding chess better rarely is, for those who investigate and play it. However, this is not that sort of book, but rather a historical book translated long after it should have been.

If you are interested in a deeper, modern investigation of the games in this book, as well as the rest of Fischer's legendary run in 1971 towards the World Championship, we recommend that you check out Tibor Karolyi's forthcoming book, *The Road to Reykjavik*, scheduled for publication three months after this volume.

However, I have selected 12 positions from earlier in this book that came across as especially interesting, where opportunities were missed by the players as well as by Taimanov when he wrote the book. Rather than giving computer analysis of them – as I have done in previous books in the Classics series – I decided to ask a few friends to give the positions a serious go; to treat them as exercises. This way, you will be able to compare yourself not just to Fischer and Taimanov (and Lutikov), but also see what others were thinking in these positions, once they were told that they were important moments, worthy of additional attention (which is already a serious advantage over the players). This is done not to compare Fischer (and Taimanov) to his countrymen of the future, but because the discussions of interesting positions always become more interesting when we look at them with an open mind, which the human mind is, and not with the closed silicon mind, which can offer us nothing but answers.

The friends I asked to participate are:

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Grandmaster Jeffery Xiong



Junior World Champion in 2016 and currently ranked No. 5 in the US and No. 32 in the world. His greatest achievement was probably his 2019 World Cup performance, where he made it to the quarter-finals, defeating among others GMs Giri and Duda, before being eliminated by the eventual winner, GM Radjabov. In the 2020 US Championship, Xiong was 2nd after Wesley So. The tournament was played in an online rapid format. Current rating 2709.

Grandmaster Sam Shankland



2018 US Champion in front of the numbers 2, 4 and 6 in the world. Double Olympiad Gold winner, twice Board One for the US at the World Team Championship and with a world ranking peak of No. 21. Current rating 2692.

Grandmaster Awonder Liang

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Grandmaster at the age of 14 and US Junior Chan World Youth Champion. At the time of writing, Awonder is getting close to his 18th birthday and is rated 2592, close to his peak of 2600.

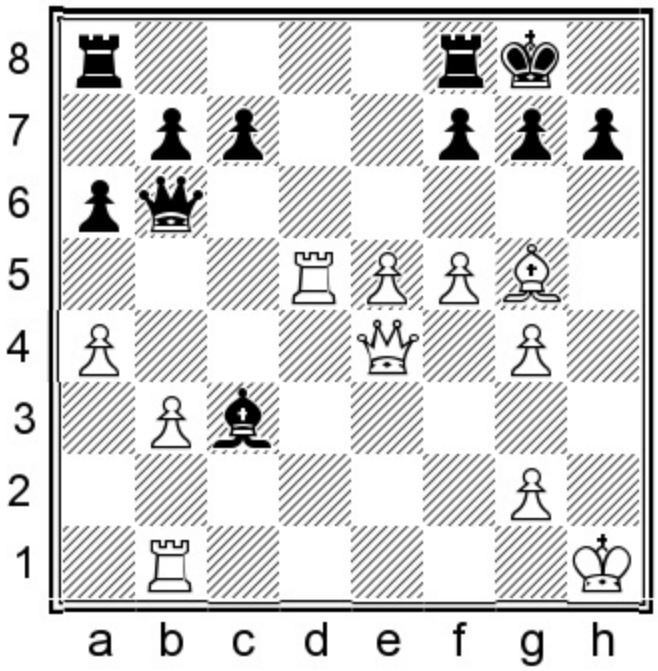
The positions

On the next three pages, you will find 12 positions, with a short description of how you should approach them. I would recommend that you take something like 10-20 minutes per position and write down your answer, as well as the most relevant variations. It will be interesting for you to compare them with the solutions later. If you find the positions difficult, don't worry. Before computers, no one even noticed that these options existed. Not even two of the greatest players of the 20th century.

1. Taimanov – Fischer

Buenos Aires (ol) 1960

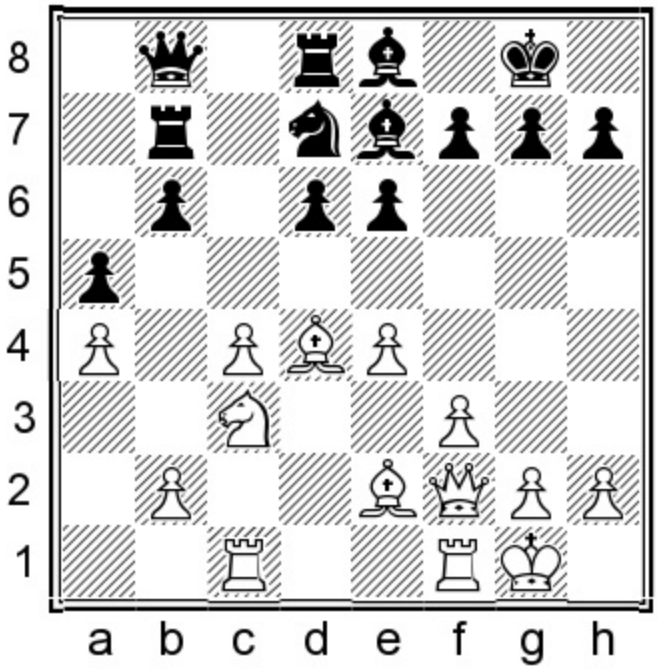
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Taimanov had a large advantage, but squandered it on the way to the time control. How should Taimanov have exploited his active pieces to the maximum?

2. Fischer – Taimanov

Palma de Mallorca 1970

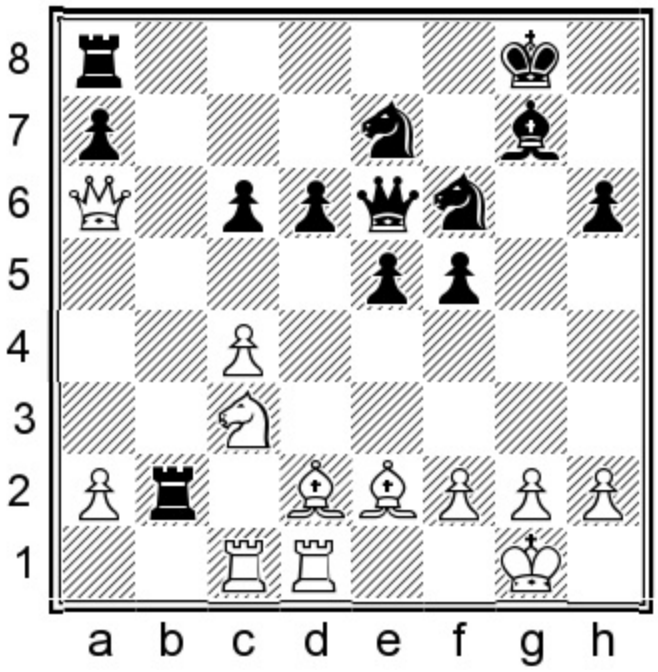


Fischer has a promising position out of the opening. But a few moves later the advantage was all gone. What was a strong way for White to strengthen his position here?

3. Taimanov – Fischer

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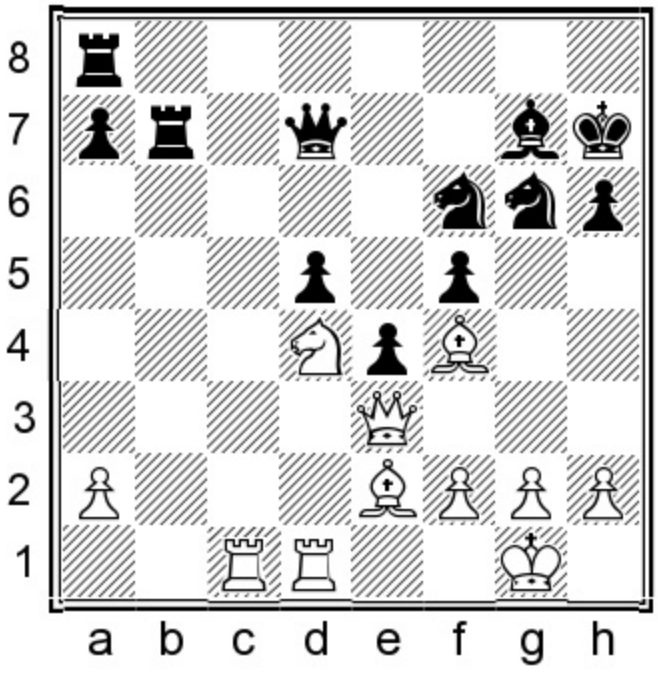
Vancouver (1) 1971



Another complex middlegame position. This time the challenge is to find the right way for Black to create an attacking position.

4. Taimanov – Fischer

Vancouver (1) 1971

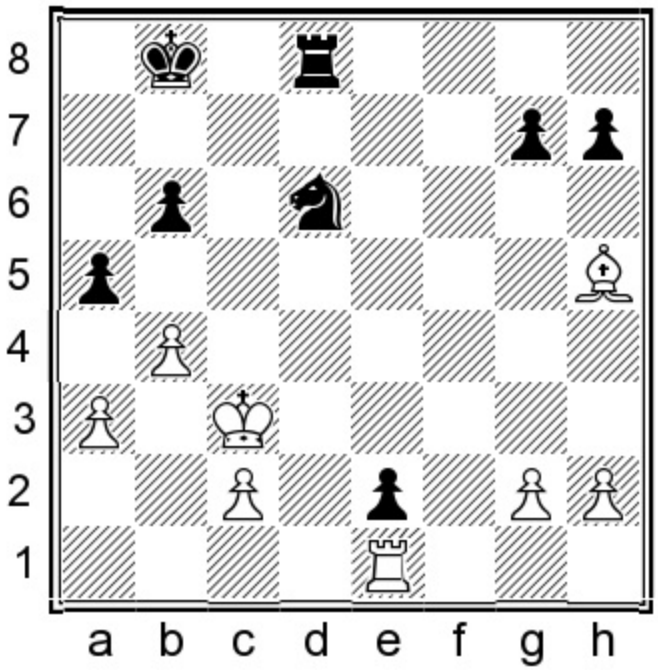


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Seven moves on from the previous position, everything has gone wrong for Fischer. How could Taimanov have exploited the situation?

5. Fischer – Taimanov

Vancouver (2) 1971

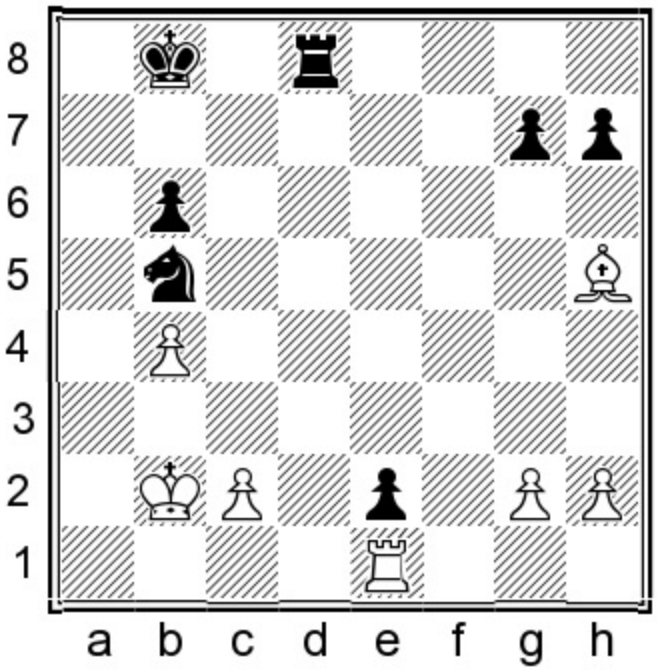


The first of two looks at this endgame. Black is obviously in a difficult situation. The material is equal, but the pawn on e2 is not long for this world. How would you react with Black?

6. Fischer – Taimanov

Vancouver (2) 1971

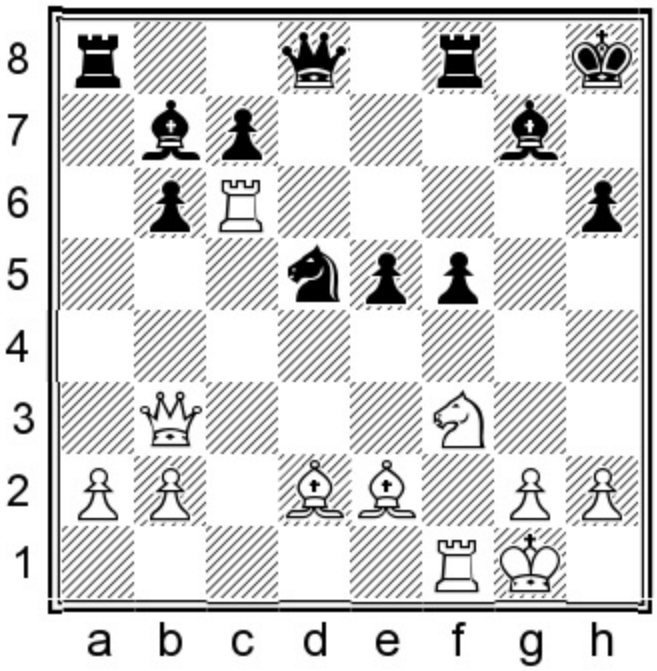
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The same game, just a few moments later. Black has not made the situation easier for himself, but the position is still defensible. How would you play here with Black?

7. Taimanov – Fischer

Vancouver (3) 1971

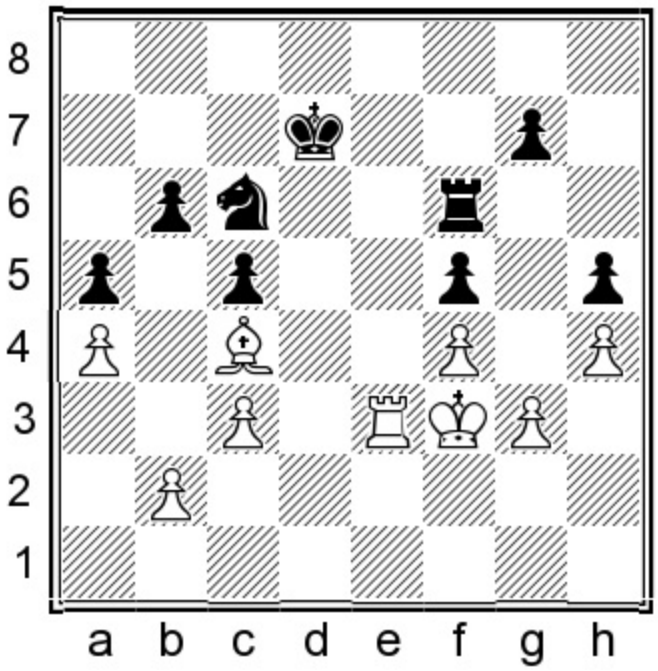


Taimanov has lost control over the centre and is on his way to another defeat. What would have been the best way to stay in the game?

8. Fischer – Taimanov

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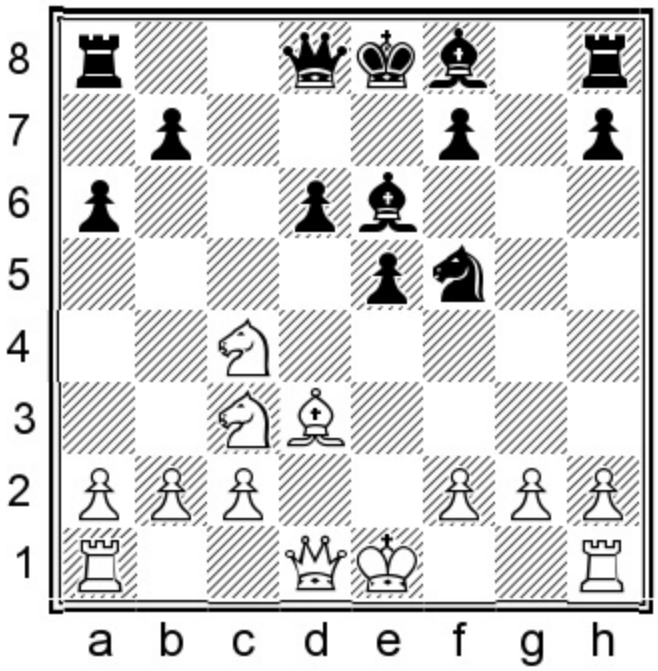
Vancouver (4) 1971



Fischer won this endgame in great style. But at this point Black was able to deliver a strong defence. How should he play?

9. Fischer – Taimanov

Vancouver (6) 1971



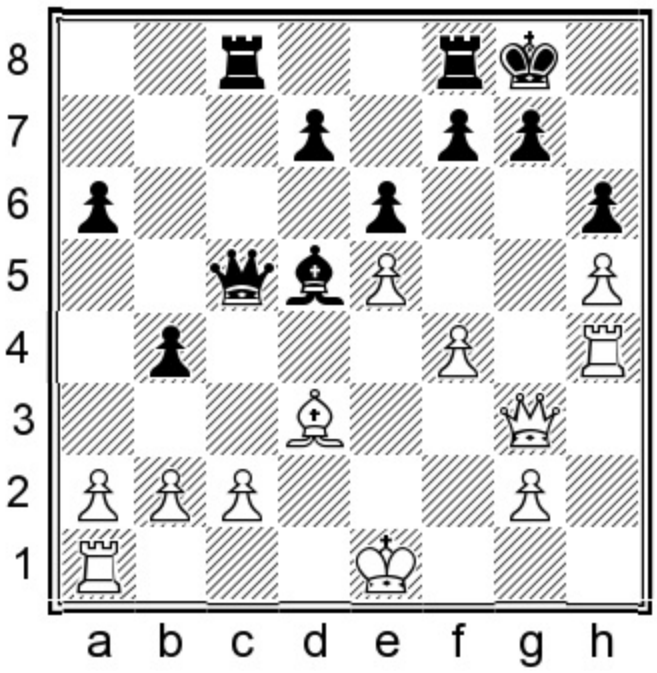
Taimanov never sensed that he was better out of the opening with the two bishops in this game:

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and soon he wasn't. How should he have played for an advantage in this position?

10. Lutikov – Taimanov

Moscow 1969

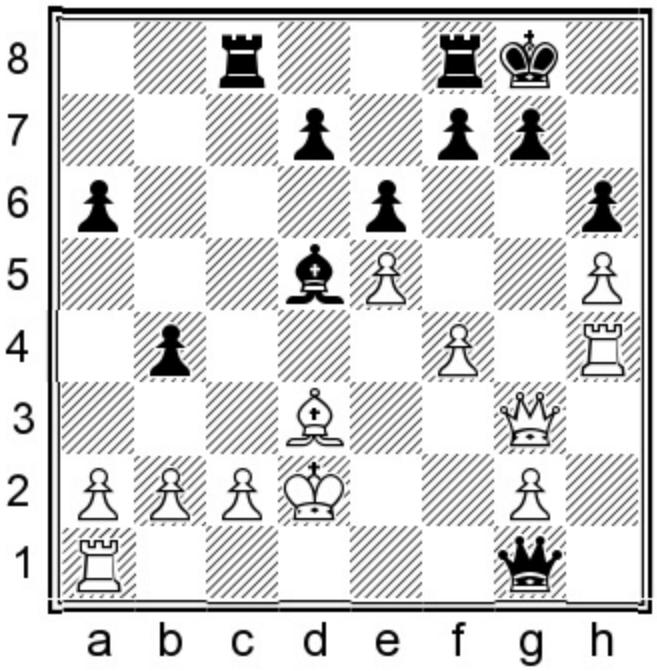


We will look at three positions from this complicated game, all of them very interesting. In the first, Black has a difficult strategic decision to make.

11. Lutikov – Taimanov

Moscow 1969

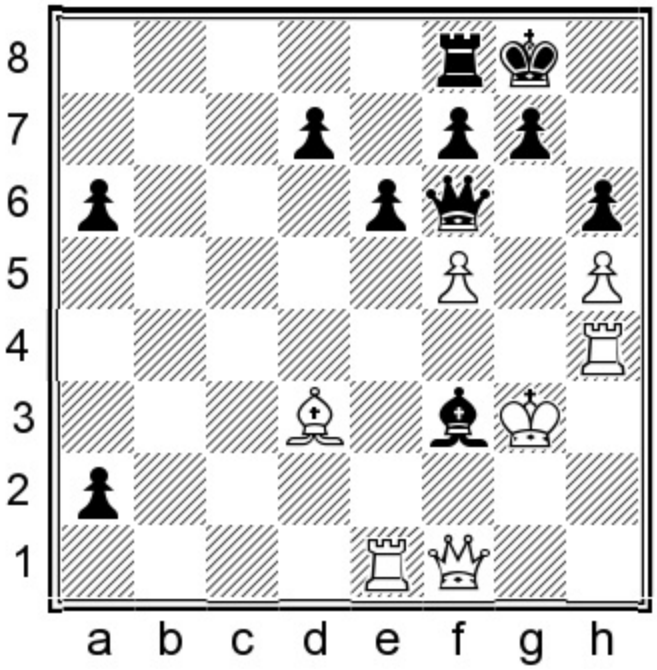
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Taimanov has just given a check on g1, which was wrong. What should he have done now?

12. Lutikov – Taimanov

Moscow 1969



This final position is very interesting strategically as well as tactically. Black won quickly, and should win quickly. But how?

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Chapter 19

Thoughts and Solutions



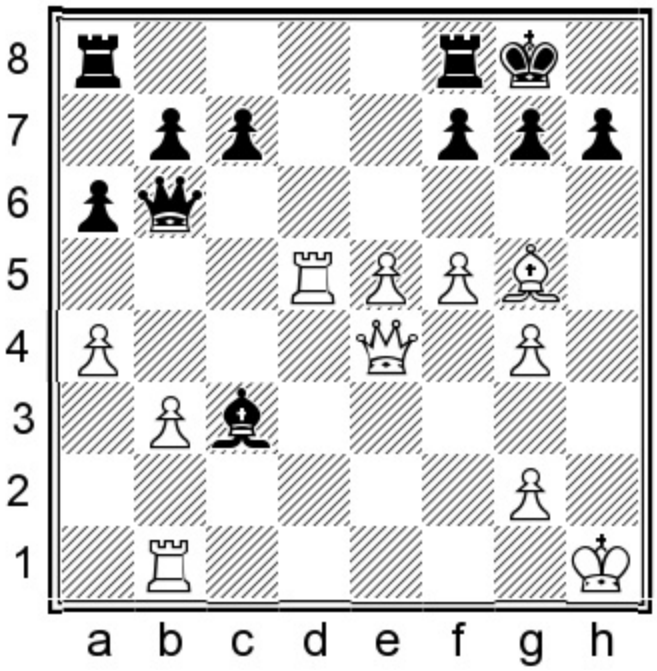
Robert Shlyakhtenko & Awonder Liang thinking

Position 1

Taimanov – Fischer

Buenos Aires (ol) 1960

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Taimanov is clearly aware that the position at this point is totally winning, but even so, he does not manage to present us with a clear path to victory. Truth be told, it is not at all easy.

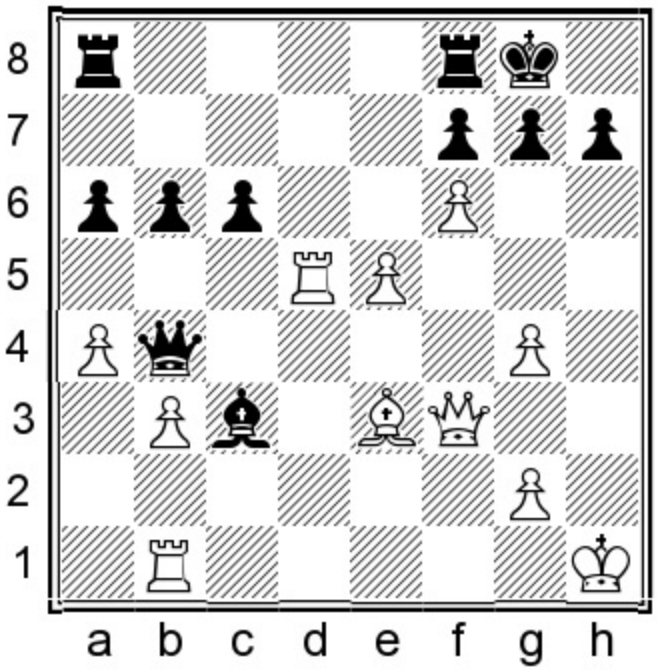
Sam was attracted to:

31.♗e3? ♕b4!

One of the attractions was that 31...♕c6 loses to 32.♕d3! ♗b4 33.♖c1!.

32.♕xb4

Jeffery rejected 31.♗e3? as he was not happy after 32.♕f3 b6?! 33.f6 c6.

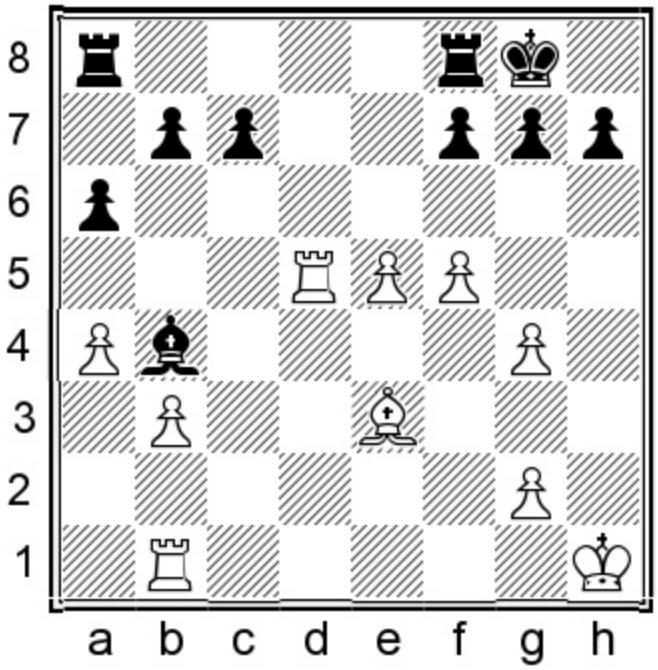


But here White has a strong punch: 34.♕f5! with a winning attack.

Instead, playing 32...c6 a move earlier is necessary. Black's position is horrible, but it is still not falling apart.

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32...♗xb4



33.♖d7?

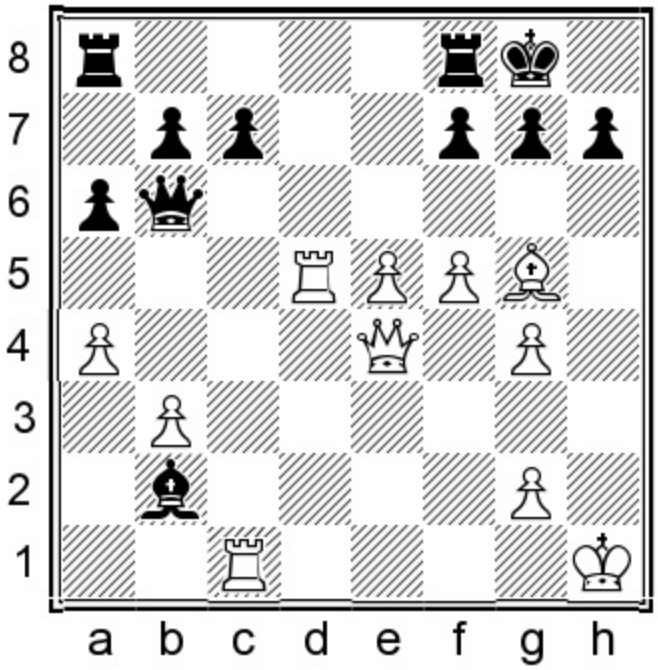
33.♖c1! would still create serious problems for Black.

But here Black has a nice way to create counterplay:

33...♖ae8! 34.♗d4 ♖d8!

And Black is back, baby!

The game went: **31.♖c1!?** Although not the most accurate, Taimanov's first move does not spoil anything. **31...♗b2**

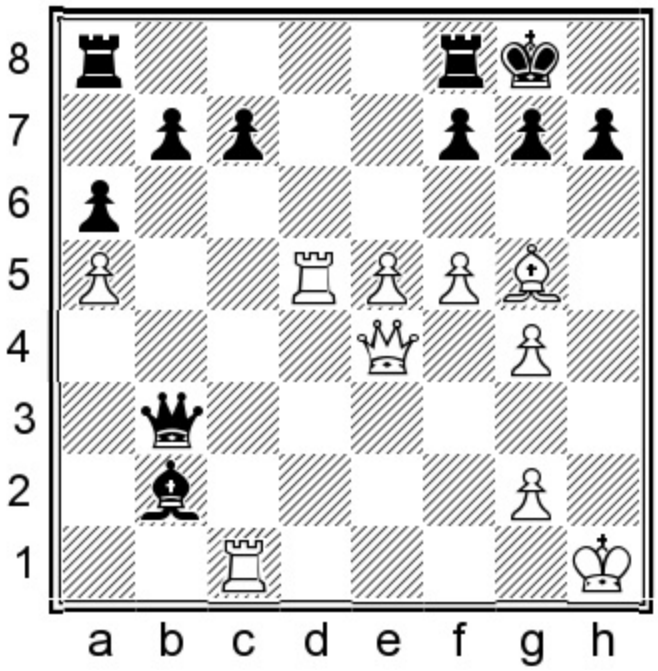


Taimanov played **32.♖c4?**, and things slipped away, as you have already seen.

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32.♖b1 ♗c3 would have repeated the position, but this was not the intention of 31.♖c1 for anyone.

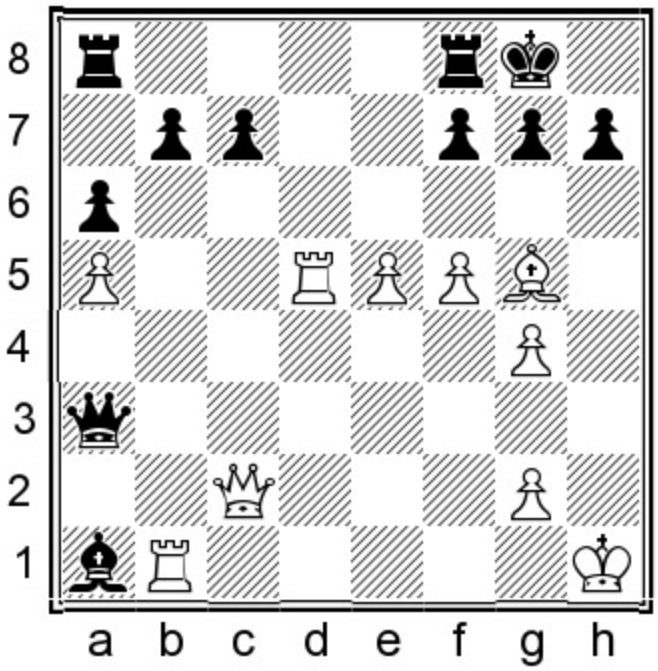
But Jeffery had another decent idea which avoids repeating: 32.a5! ♕xb3



And here he was undecided between two options:

He saw 33.♖xc7 with a winning technical advantage.

He also spotted the attempt to trap the bishop with 33.♖b1! ♕a3 34.♕c2, but was unsure if he had seen everything. The critical line is: 34...♗a1



After both 35.♖dd1 ♕xa5 36.♖xa1 ♕xe5 and 35.♗d2! ♖ad8 36.♖xd8 ♖xd8 37.♗b4 it is time for Black to resign.

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Best is:

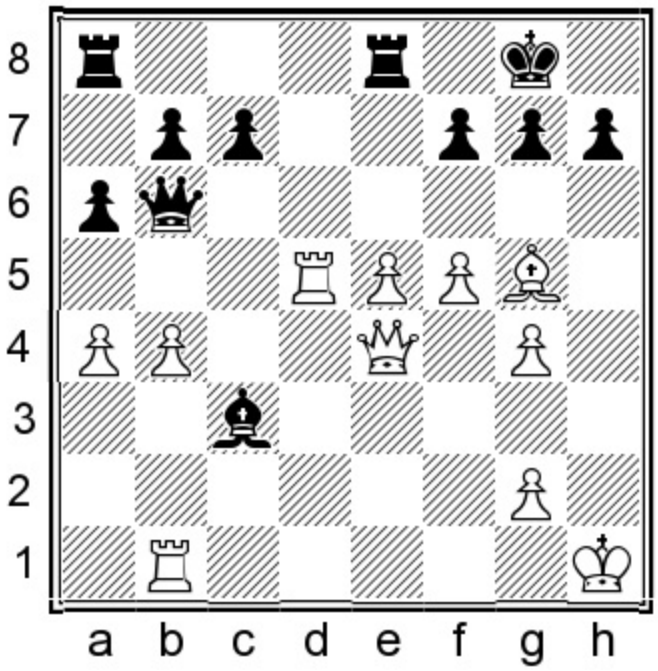
31.b4!

This is a surprising move that traps the bishop on c3. Only Awonder wanted this move. An immediate threat is 32.♗e3.

31...♖fe8!?

The best trick I can come up with.

For example: 31...h6 32.♗e3 ♕c6 33.♕d3 would win a piece.



32.♖c5!

The accurate move. Awonder had missed that 32.♗e3? can be met with 32...♕f6!! and Black escapes. But in a real game situation, I would presume he would have spotted it when it was time to make the 32nd move.

32...f6 33.♕c4† ♔h8

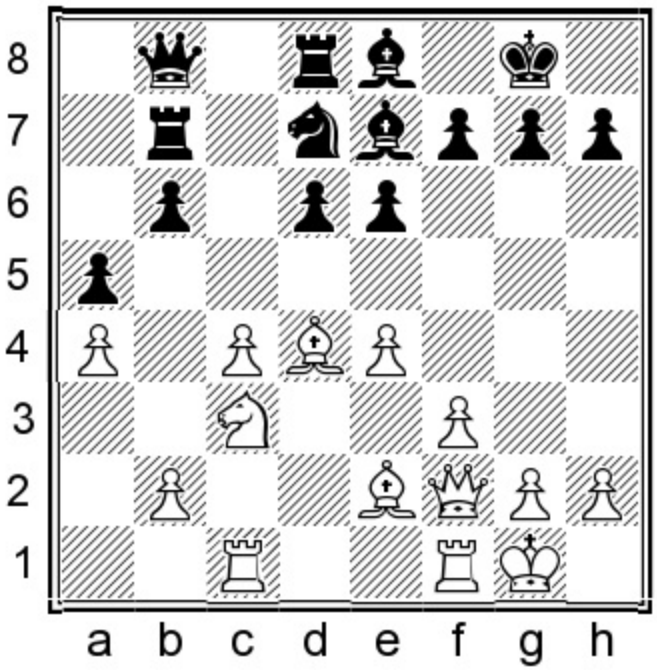
White does not actually win a piece, but after 34.a5 ♕a7 35.♗xf6 gxf6 36.♕xc3 the position is entirely overwhelming.

Position 2

Fischer – Taimanov

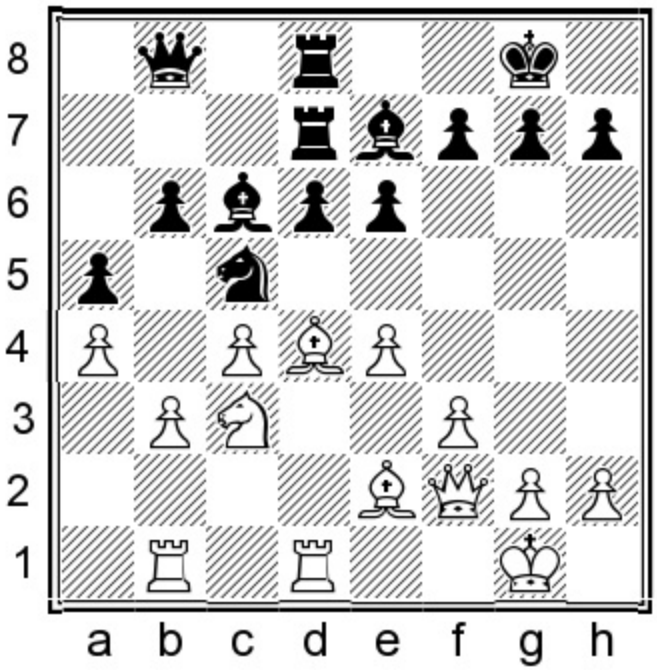
Palma de Mallorca 1970

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In the game Fischer played: **20.♕g3**, when after **20...♗f6 21.♗xf6 ♘xf6 22.♖fd1 e5!** White is not in any serious way better, as Taimanov explains on page 38. The only thing to add is that his last move does not seem controversial to someone looking at the game with eyes from the 21st century.

Jeffery started out by saying that in a game he would probably have played 20.b3 without thinking too much about it. It was the move chosen by Awonder Liang. However, after: 20...♘c5 21.♖b1 ♗c6 22.♖fd1 ♖bd7!



Black is ready for ...d5, when he will equalize fully. Even if White ends up with the bishop pair, the strong knight on c5 more than makes up for this.

Jeffery also wanted to play 20.♕g3, but had somehow not taken in that Black could play 20...♗f6

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without any serious drawbacks.

He was planning to meet 20...g6?! with 21.f4 ♘c5 22.♖cd1. The position is very complicated after 22...♘xa4 23.f5 e5! 24.♗e3 ♘xc3 25.bxc3 f6!, where White has an attack. But without knights and with the a5-pawn also being a real long-term factor, it is not obvious White is better.

It turns out that 21.♗d3! ♘e5 22.f4 ♘xd3 23.♕xd3, followed by f4-f5 is far more dangerous for Black. But as said, 20...♗f6 solves all of Black's problems.

Thus, the strongest continuation is:

20.f4!

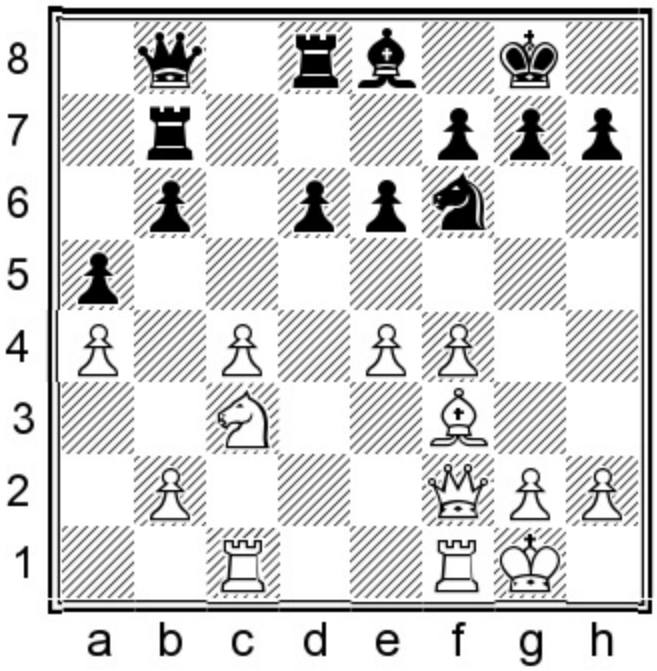
This was the choice of Sam Shankland. White's least effective piece is the bishop on e2. Putting it on f3 will take control of the d5-square and keep Black in a permanent bind.

20...♗f6

20...♘c5 21.♕g3 ♗f8 22.f5 with an attack was one of Sam's intentions. White is already threatening ♗xg7.

20...e5 21.♘d5 ♗f8 22.♗e3 exf4 23.♕xf4 ♘e5 24.b3 also looks glorious for White.

21.♗xf6 ♘xf6 22.♗f3



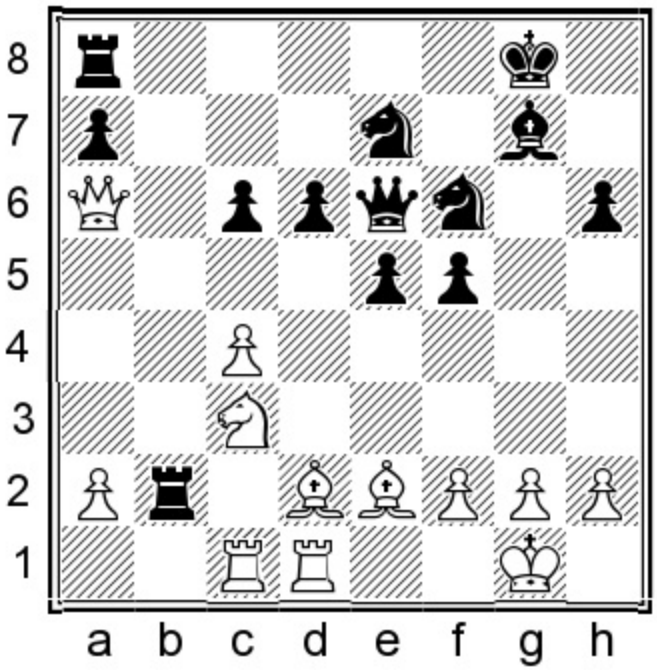
White is in full control of the position and has a significant advantage.

Position 3

Taimanov – Fischer

Vancouver (1) 1971

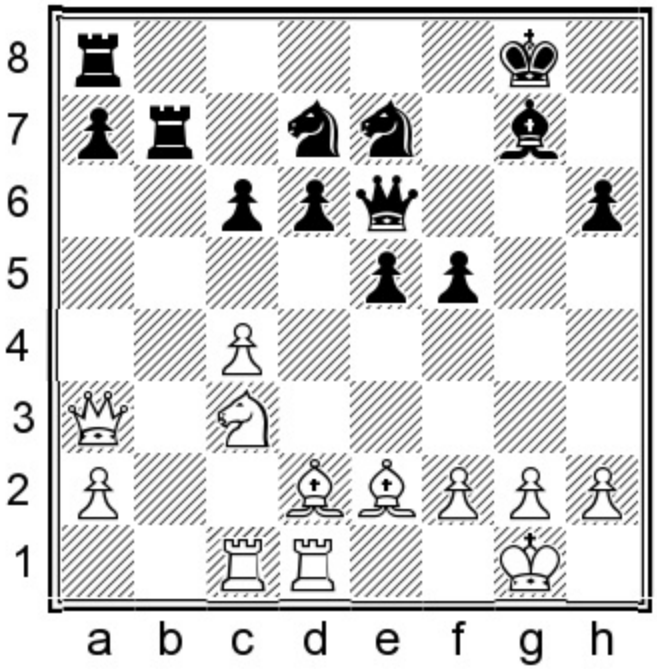
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Although in this position there is a “best” way of playing, it is very difficult to find it.

20...e4 was Fischer’s choice and a very natural move, after which both sides had their chances.

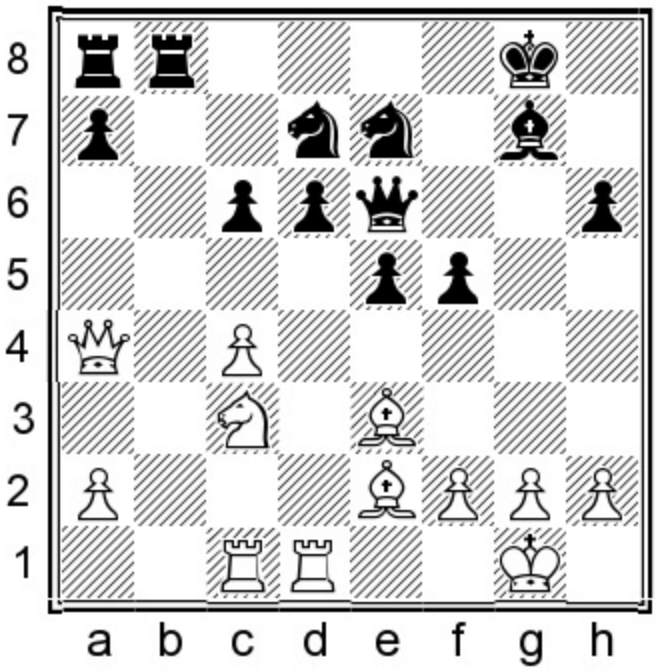
Awonder Liang wanted to play 20...♘d7 21.♕a3 ♖b7, when he felt the position was more or less OK.



He is right, as after 22.♗e3, the answer from Black should be 22...c5!, a move Taimanov misses in his notes. The position is about equal.

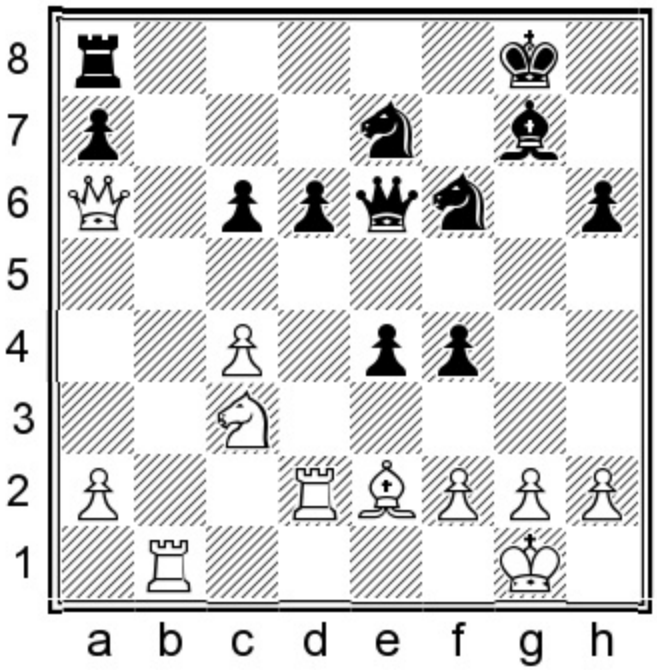
Xiong wanted to continue 21...♖bb8 22.♗e3 ♘c8, but was feeling very uncomfortable about it: 23.♕a4 ♘e7

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24.♘d5! with an advantage for White shows that Jeffery was right to feel uncomfortable.

20...f4 was the choice of Sam. His idea was the most fascinating, planning to meet 21.♖b1 with: 21...♖xd2!? 22.♖xd2 e4∓ with a very double-edged position.



Pure chaos could emerge quickly. For example: 23.♕b7 ♖f8 24.♕xa7 f3!? 25.gxf3 ♘f5, with an extremely complicated position with chances for both sides.

The strongest continuation is rather surprising, but once you see it, totally convincing:

20...♖b6!

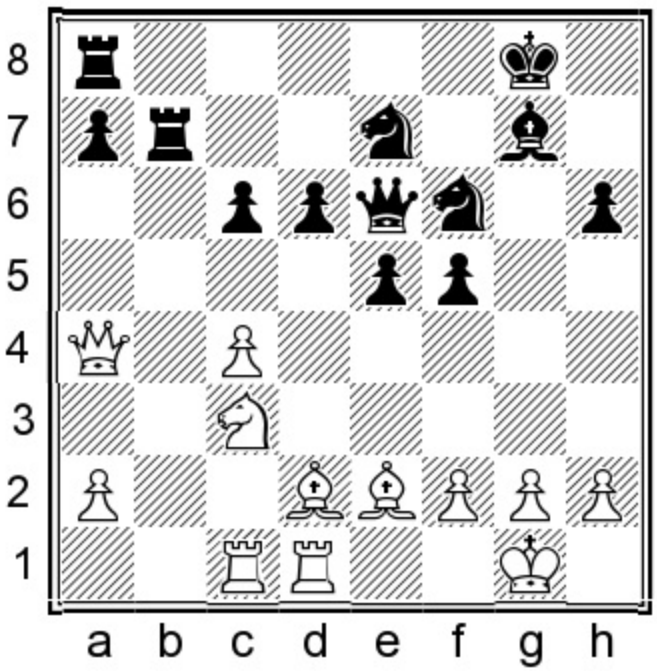
First the white queen is pushed away.

21.♕a4

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21.♕a3 is not different in any significant way.

21...♖b7!!

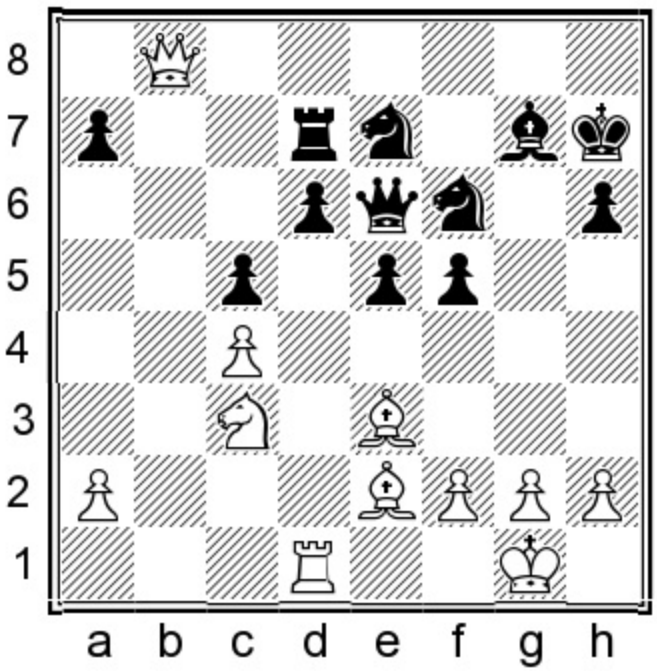


A very surprising regrouping. The rook is not really active on b2, but can support the black centre from behind the pawns.

22.♖b1 ♖d7

Black is ready to push the centre, as well as to play ...♔h8 and ...♖g8 with play on the kingside. White will have to play very accurately to only be slightly worse. The main line from Stockfish 13 looks like this:

23.♕a6 ♖ad8 24.♖b7 ♖xb7 25.♕xb7 ♖d7 26.♕b8† ♔h7 27.♗e3 c5



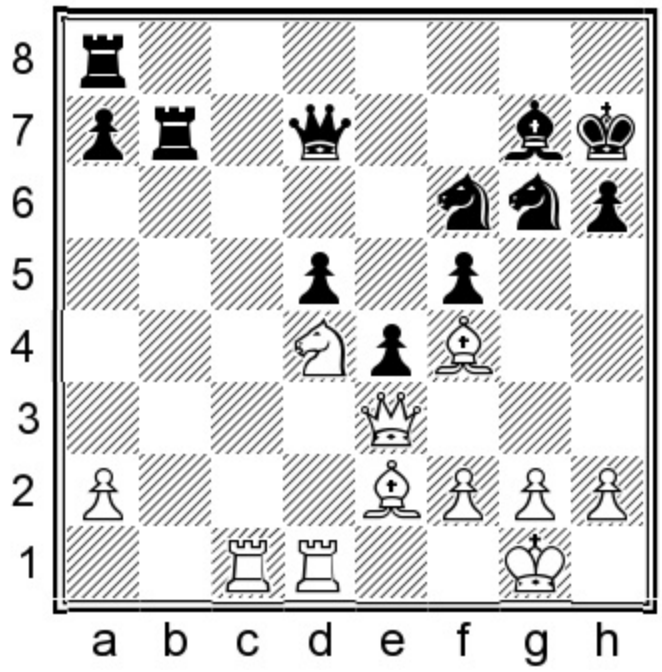
Black is only slightly better.

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Position 4

Taimanov – Fischer

Vancouver (1) 1971



The game went:

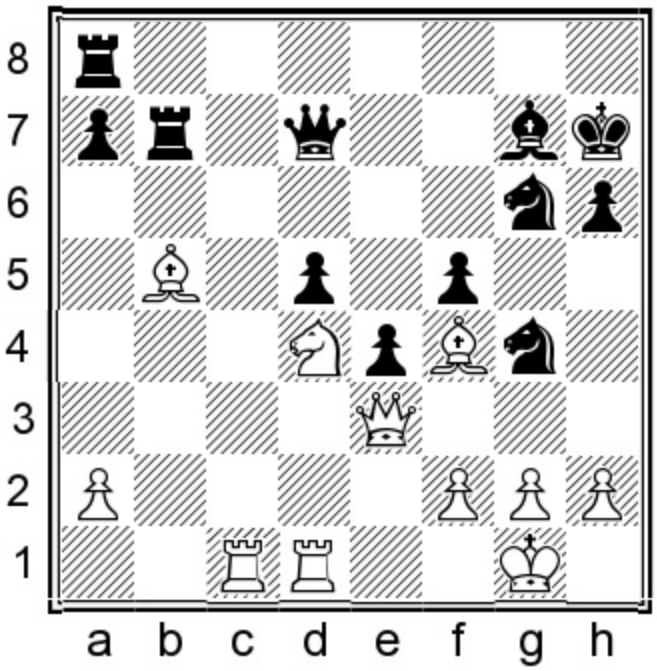
27.h3?! after which **27...♖f8!** was played and the position was no longer dangerous for Black. Fischer later won...
The choice of all of the young Americans was 27.♗b5!?, which is certainly the correct direction. Only, it does not quite work.

Awonder was hoping for 27...♖xb5 28.♖c7? to happen. After 28...♕e8 29.♗xh6 ♘h5 30.♗xg7 ♘xg7 31.♘xf5 he was very optimistic.

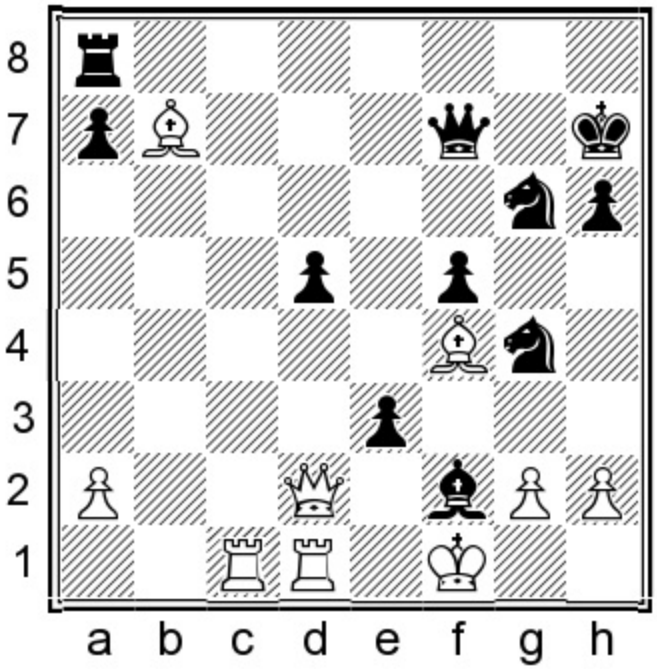
27...♕e7? 28.♘xf5 also wins for White.

Both Jeffery and Sam knew that 27...♘g4! was coming.

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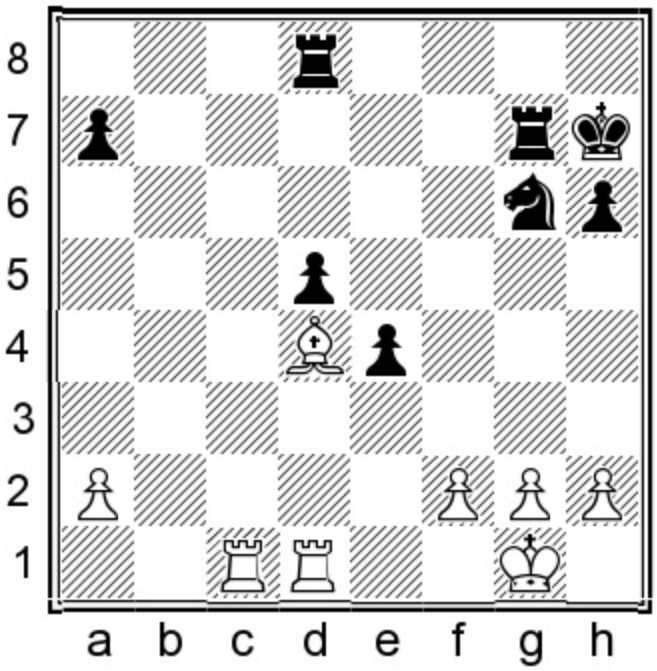
a) 28.♕d2 ♕f7 is fine for Black. A curious forced variation can arise here: 29.♗c6 ♗xd4! 30.♗xb7 ♗xf2† 31.♔f1 e3!



32.♖c7! The only move. 32...♕xc7 33.♗xc7 exd2 34.♗xa8 ♘e3† 35.♔xf2 ♘xd1† 36.♔e2 ♘c3† 37.♔xd2 ♘xa2 with a drawn ending. The knight is not trapped. 38.♗a5 d4! and simplifications will follow.

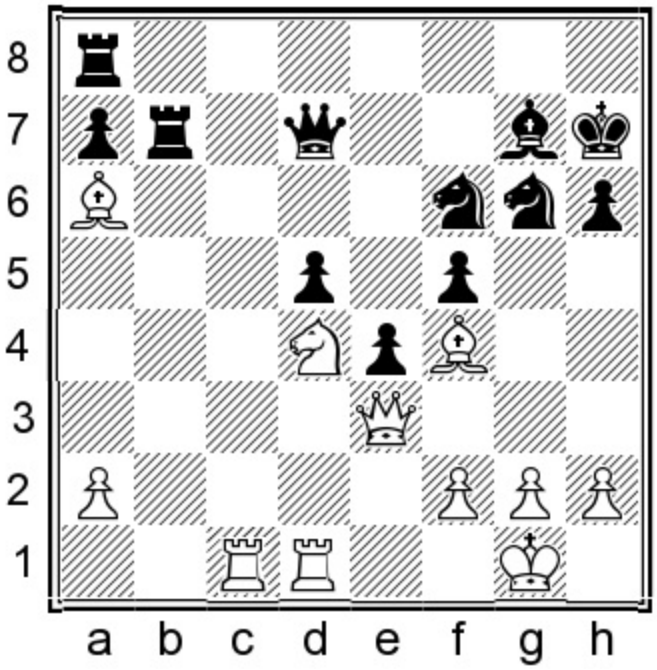
b) 28.♗xd7 is clearly the critical continuation: 28...♘xe3 29.♗xe3 ♖xd7 30.♘xf5 ♖ad8 31.♘xg7 ♖xg7 32.♗d4

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Both Sam and Jeffery wanted this. Black should be more or less OK after 32...♖gd7, but simpler is 32...♘f4! 33.♗xg7 ♘e2† 34.♔f1 ♘xc1 35.♗xh6 ♔xh6 36.♖xc1 d4, where White's extra pawn does not translate into winning chances.

The solution is thus:
27.♗a6!



Only Awonder was expecting:

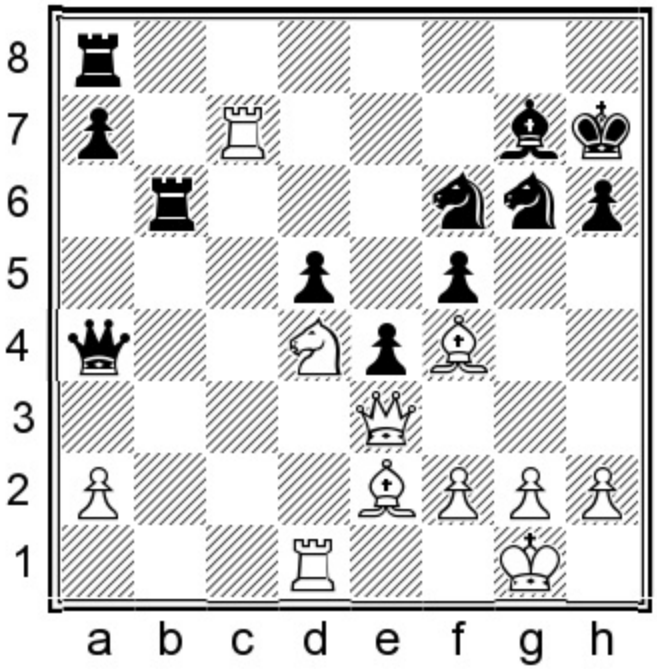
a) 27...♖b6?!

This is the move I have seen as the main move in other sources, but for those thinking about the position, this is not what they were concerned about.

28.♗b5!

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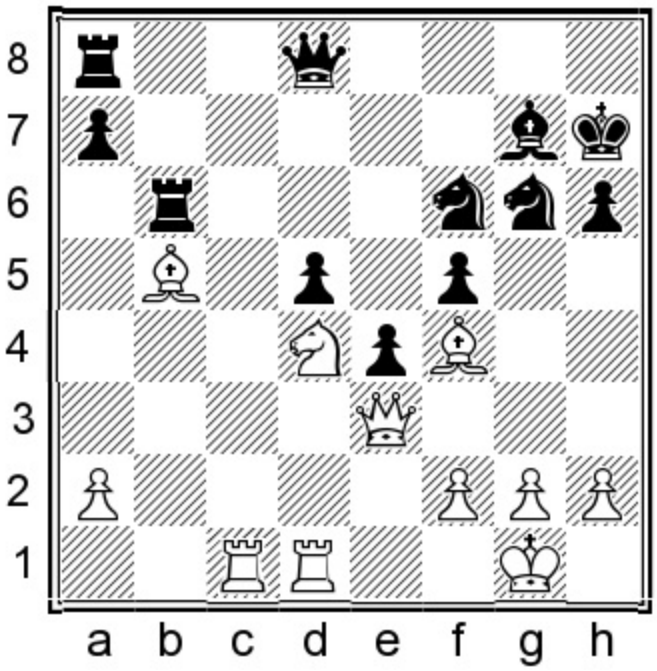
Jeffery had wanted 28.♖c7 ♕a4! 29.♗e2, when Black's position is by no means easy to hold.



But hold it does, after a few accurate moves: 29...♘e8! (Jeffery and I looked for a while at 29...♘g4?, before realizing that White can win on the spot with: 30.♖xg7†!) 30.♖f7?! is critical, as withdrawing the rook is obviously not dangerous for Black. But it is not good. 30...♔g8! 31.♖xf5? ♗xd4 32.♕xd4 ♕xd4 33.♖xd4 ♘g7! and the rook on f5 is trapped.

28...♕d8

28...♖xb5 29.♖c7 and 30.♗xh6 wins as above.



29.♗c7

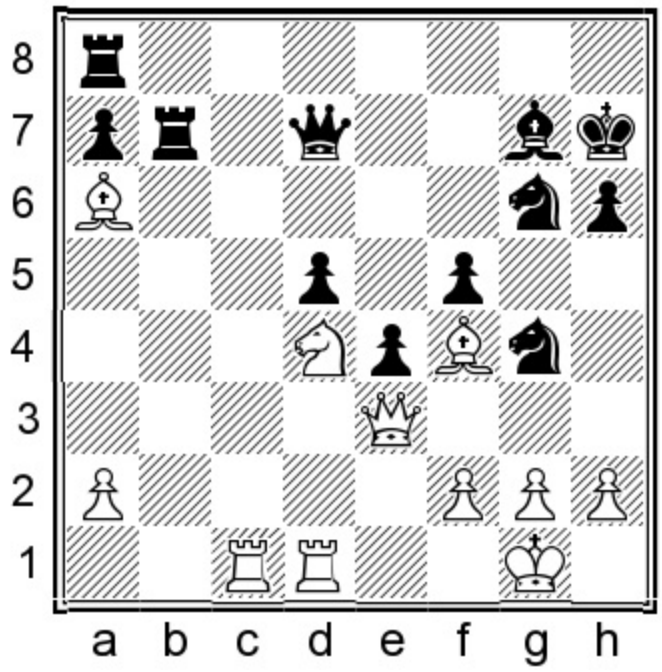
29.♖c7!? is also interesting, but we only need one way to win.

29...♘g4 30.♕g3 ♗e5 31.♗xd8 ♗xg3 32.hxg3 ♖xd8 33.♖c7† ♔h8 34.♖xa7

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Despite the material being equal, White is just winning. All his pieces are superior and a4-a5 is on the way.

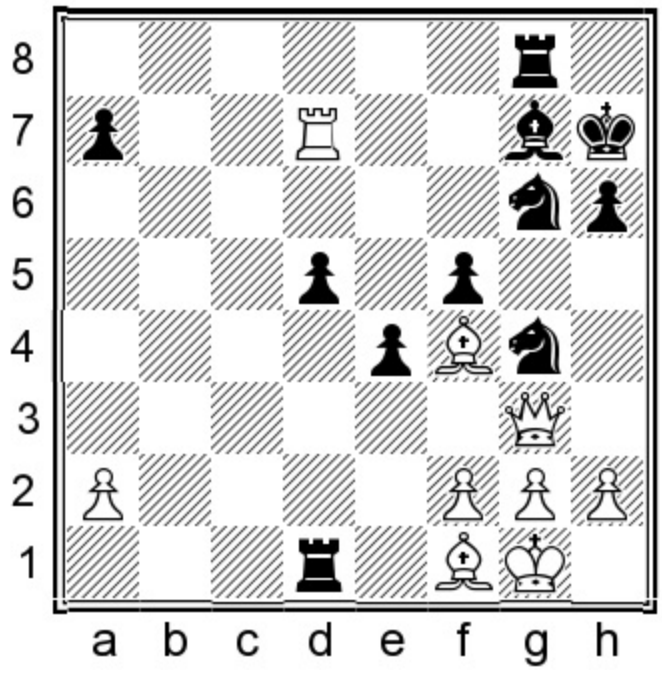
b) 27...♘g4!



Both Sam and Jeffery rejected 27.♗a6 for this reason.

28.♕g3 ♘xf4

28...♖b4 29.♖c7 ♖xd4!? is another defensive try worth calculating. After 30.♖xd7 ♖xd1† 31.♗f1 ♖g8 White has to show accuracy to prove an advantage:



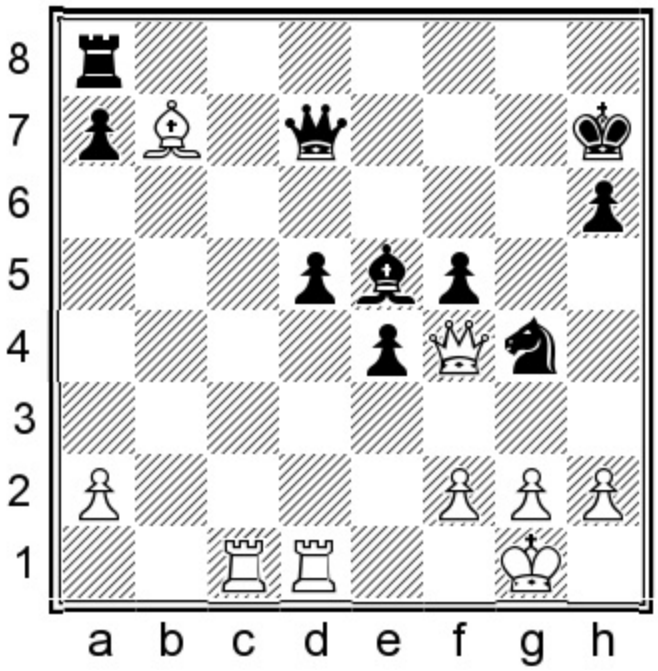
32.h3! ♘f6 33.♖xa7 d4 34.♗e5 ♘xe5 35.♕xe5 ♔h8 36.♖f7! ♘h7 37.♖xg7! ♖xg7 38.h4! d3 39.♕b8† ♖g8 40.♕b3 and Black has to take on f1, after which the win is a matter of

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technicalities.

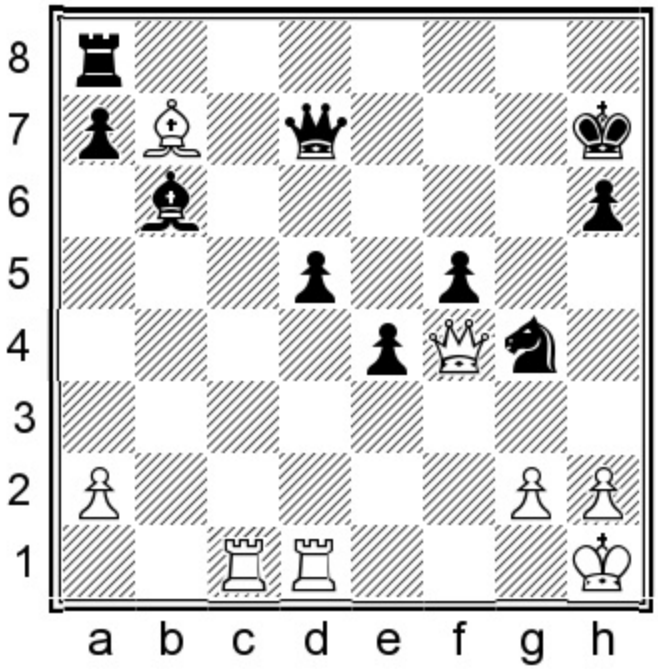
29.♗xb7 ♗xd4 30.♕xf4 ♗xf2†

30...♗e5 is what made Sam give up on this line.



But White has 31.♖xd5!, winning.

31.♔h1 ♗b6



Jeffery Xiong had discarded this entire variation, thinking that Black had sufficient counterplay here. One line could be: 32.♖xd5 ♕xb7 33.♕xf5† ♔h8 34.♖d7 ♕xd7 35.♕xd7 ♘f2† 36.♔g1 ♘d3† With a perpetual, as White cannot play 37.♔f1?? ♖f8† 38.♔e2 ♘xc1† 39.♔d2 ♖d8!, when Black wins.

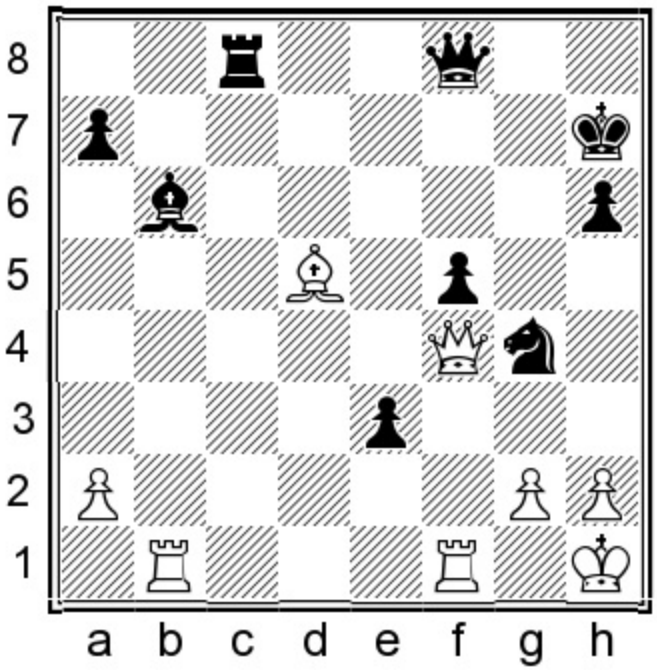
But White has an intermediate move.

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32.♗c6! ♕f7

The queen has no other squares. Black is literally playing only-moves the whole way.

33.♗xd5 ♕f8 34.♖f1 ♖c8 35.♖b1!? e3



36.♗e6 e2 37.♗xf5† ♔h8 38.♕xg4 exf1=♖† 39.♖xf1

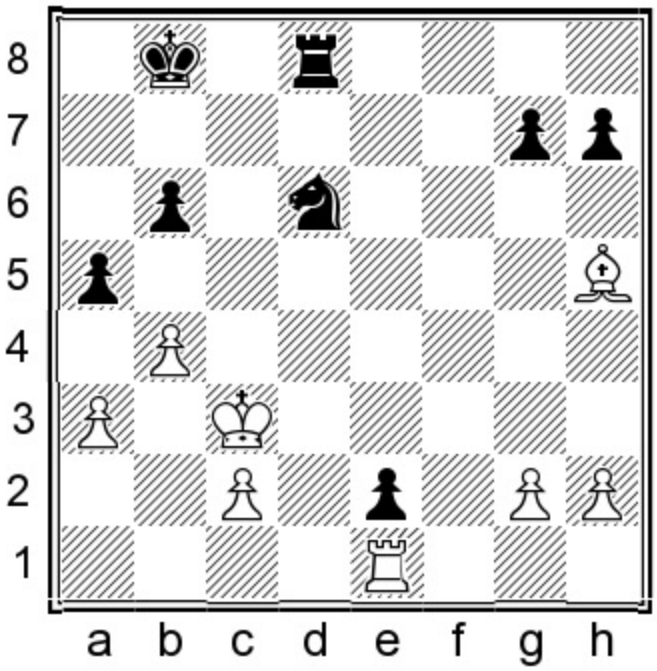
White has a serious advantage: an extra pawn and an attack against the weakened black king.

Position 5

Fischer – Taimanov

Vancouver (2) 1971

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35...♘b5†?!

Objectively this is not a bad move, but it certainly intensifies the demands on Black to keep everything together, as we shall see below.

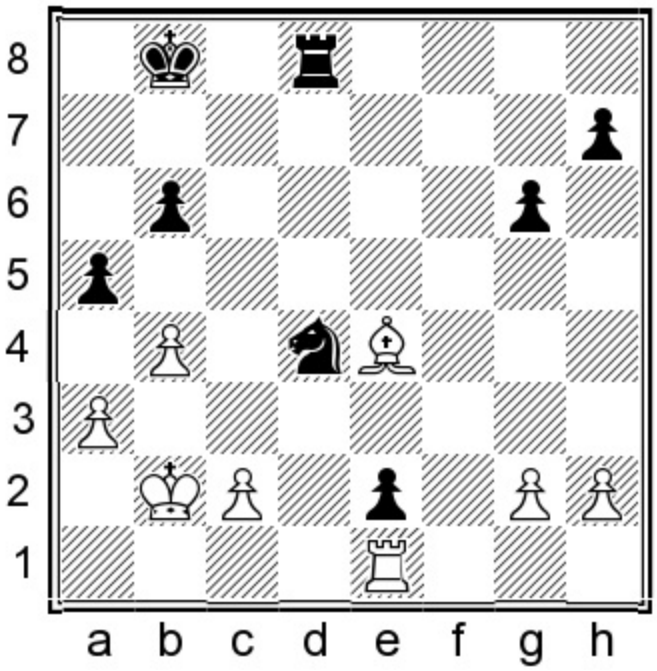
36.♔b2 axb4

Awonder and Sam both wanted to play:

36...g6?

But it comes out in the details that it does not hold together.

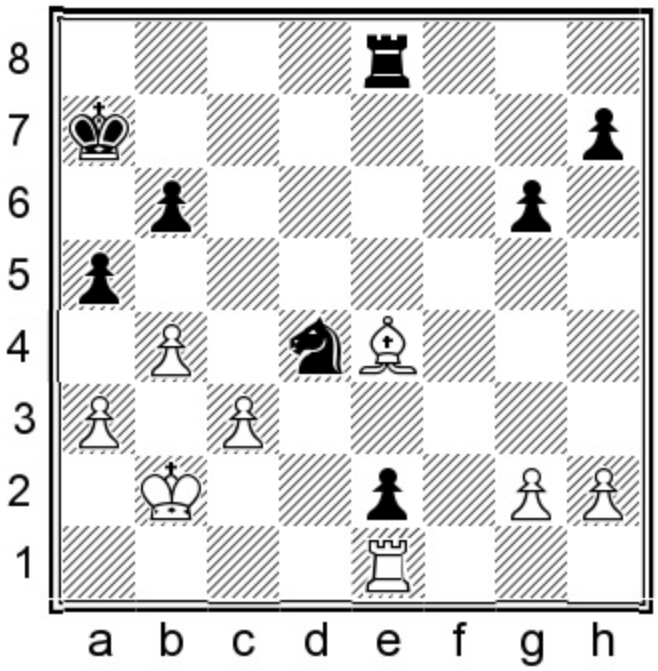
37.♗f3! ♘d4 38.♗e4



a) 38...a4 39.c3 ♖e8 40.♗d5 does not work well.

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b) Sam wanted to try:
38...♔a7 39.c3 ♖e8



But White has a beautiful resource:
40.♗b1!!

40.♗d3 ♖e3! with counterplay was the idea.

40...♘f5 41.♗d3!

The bishop returns and the pawn is dead. White should win. For example:
41...♘h4 42.g3 ♘f3 43.♖xe2 ♖xe2† 44.♗xe2 ♘xh2 45.c4

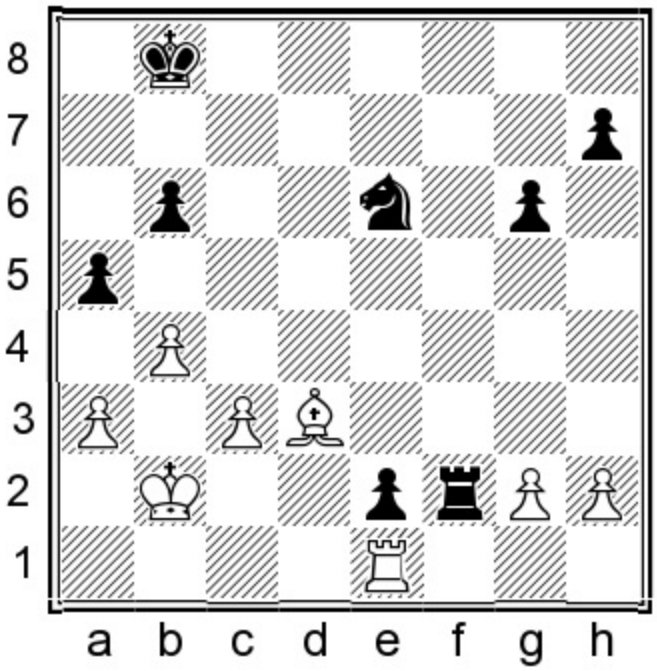
And although the material is equal, the endgame is obviously winning for White. The knight is trapped and we can view this as a pawn ending where Black cannot create a passed pawn on the kingside.

c) Awonder's move was:
38...♖f8 39.♗d3 ♖f2 40.c3

40.♔c3! is also strong.

40...♘e6

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This was near the end of Awonder's line ("Very clever Awonder!" – Sam), hoping for 41.♖xe2? ♘f4!!. But sadly, White has the intermediate move:

41.♗c4!!

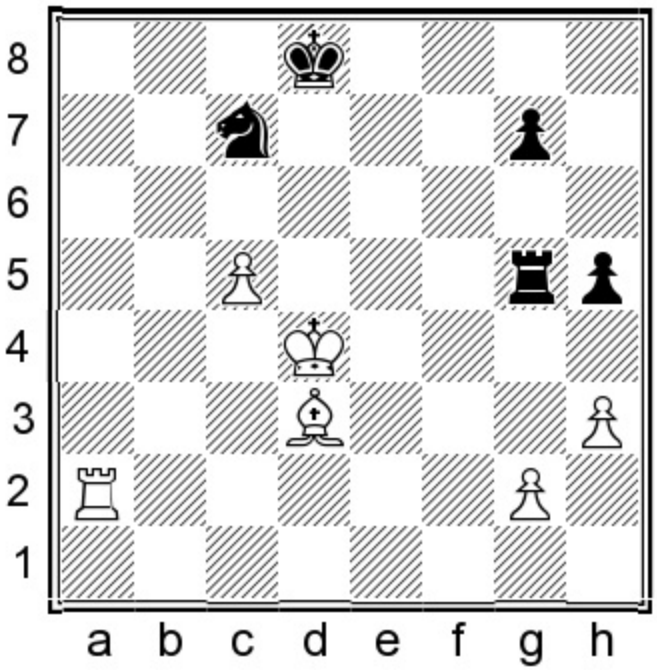
White wins on the spot. In this way the line is not conceptually different from Sam's, where the attack on the bishop was meant to save everything, but where the white bishop has additional options.

37.axb4 ♖d4

We will look at 37...♖c8 in the next exercise.

38.c3 ♖h4 39.♗xe2 ♘d6 40.♖d1 ♔c7 41.h3 ♖f4 42.♖f1 ♖e4 43.♗d3 ♖e5 44.♖f2 h5 45.c4 ♖g5 46.♔c3 ♔d7 47.♖a2 ♔c8 48.♔d4 ♔c7 49.♖a7† ♔d8 50.c5 bxc5† 51.bxc5 ♘e8! 52.♖a2 ♘c7

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I could also have included this position, where White had a very complicated way to play for a win, but I decided to keep a focus on the defensive lines, which seemed more interesting.

53.♗c4?

The winning line is:

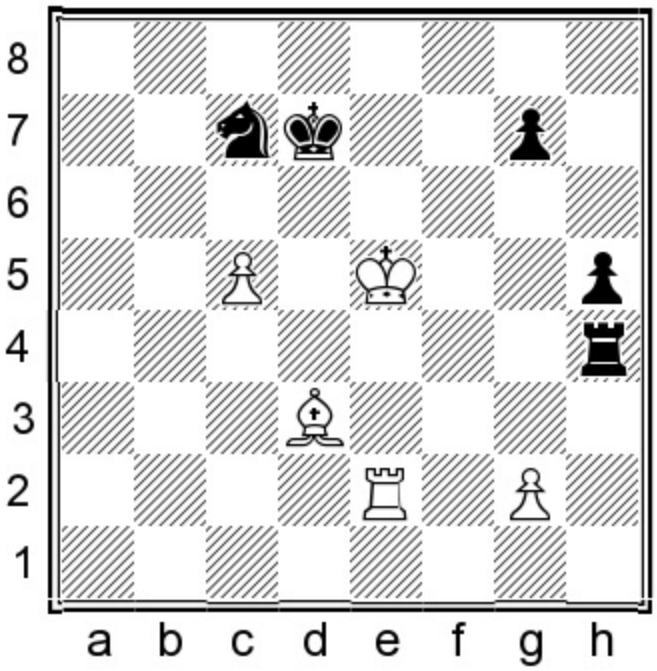
53.♖e2! ♔d7

53...h4 54.c6! ♘e8 55.♗e4 is also dominating.

54.h4! ♖g4† 55.♔e5

This is the idea. It looks as if it is very difficult for Black to defend the position. For example:

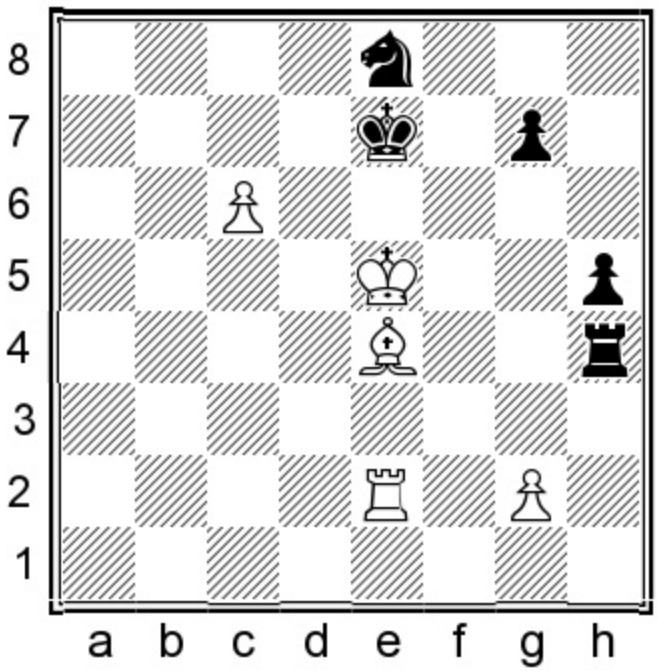
55...♖xh4



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56.♗e4! ♔e7 57.c6 ♘e8

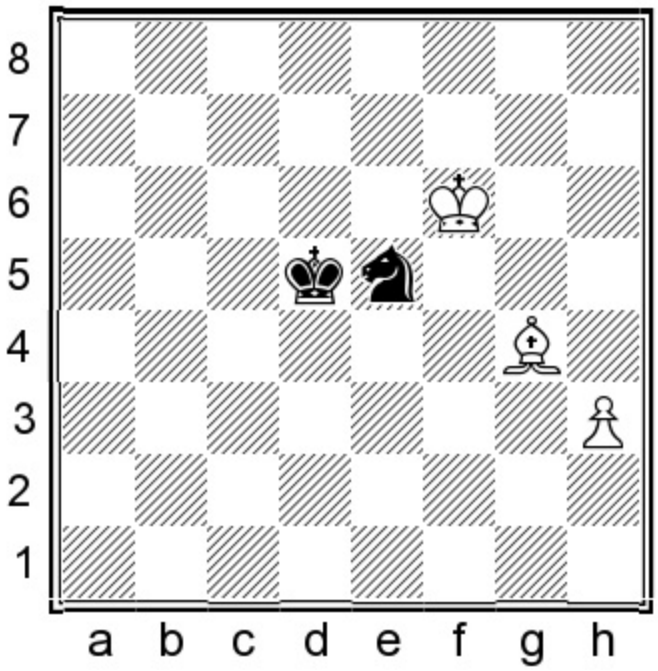
57...♖h1 58.♖d2! ♘e8 59.♖d7† ♔f8 60.♗g6 The dual threat of ♖e8 and c6-c7 is decisive.



58.♗g6! ♘f6 59.♖c2!

White wins; first the knight and then the endgame.

53...♔d7 54.♖b2 ♔c6 55.♗b3 ♘b5† 56.♔e3 ♔xc5 57.♔f4 ♖g6 58.♗d1 h4 59.♔f5 ♖h6 60.♔g5 ♘d6 61.♗c2 ♘f7† 62.♔g4 ♘e5† 63.♔f4 ♔d4 64.♖b4† ♔c3 65.♖b5 ♘f7 66.♖c5† ♔d4 67.♖f5 g5† 68.♔g4 ♘e5† 69.♔xg5 ♖g6† 70.♔xh4 ♖xg2 71.♗d1 ♖g8 72.♗g4 ♔e4 73.♔g3 ♖g7 74.♖f4† ♔d5 75.♖a4 ♘g6 76.♖a6 ♘e5 77.♔f4 ♘g6† 78.♔g5 ♘e5† 79.♔f5 ♖f7† 80.♖f6 ♖xf6† 81.♔xf6



81...♔e4?

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81...♘d3 82.h4 ♘f4 83.♔f5 ♔d6 was the simplest way to make the draw, as pointed out by Taimanov.

82.♗c8! ♔f4 83.h4 ♘f3 84.h5 ♘g5 85.♗f5! ♘f3 86.h6 ♘g5 87.♔g6 ♘f3 88.h7 ♘e5† 89.♔f6

1–0

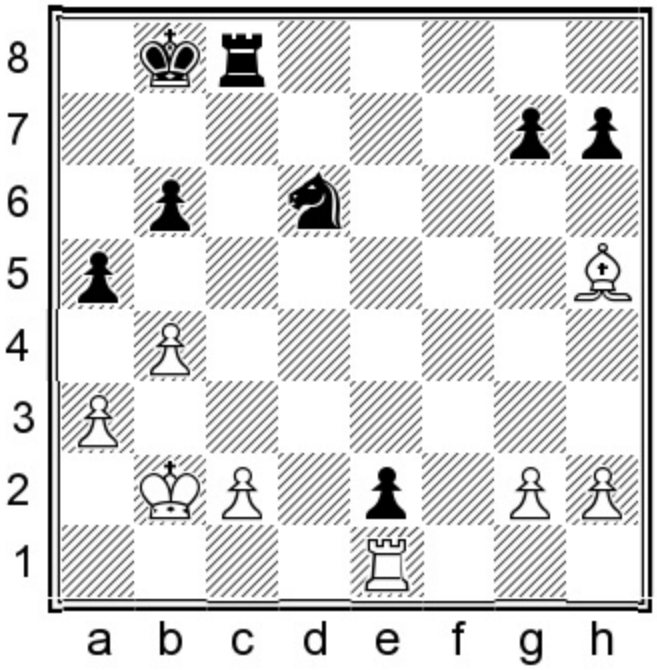
The critical move is:

35...♖c8†!

As Taimanov correctly assumed, the critical reply is now:

36.♔b2!

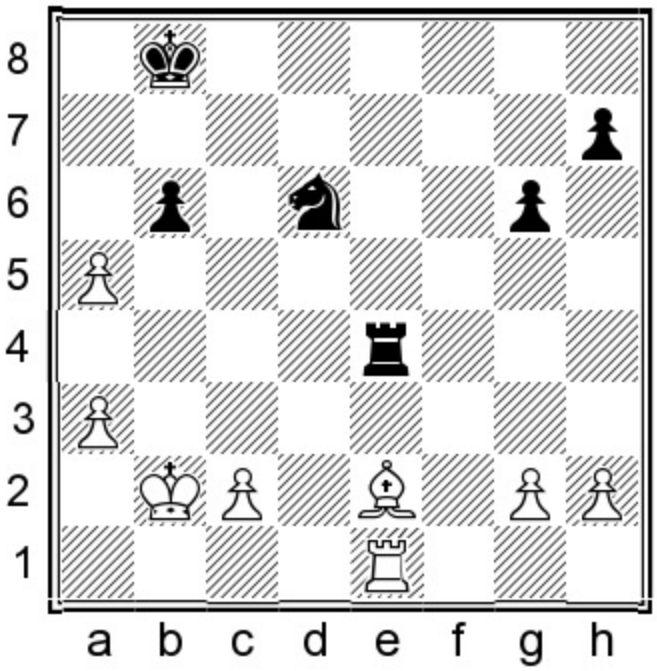
When we have two main paths to go down for Black.



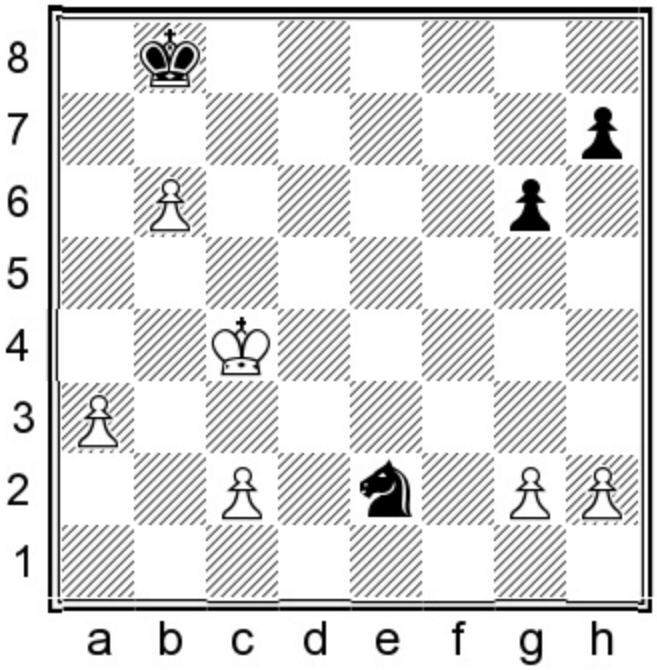
36...♘c4†

There is a rather obscure line Black could also try, which works well, but is rather impractical from a human perspective: 36...g6!? 37.♗g4! (37.♗xe2?! ♖e8! equalizes on the spot) 37...♖c4 38.♗xe2 ♖e4 39.bxa5

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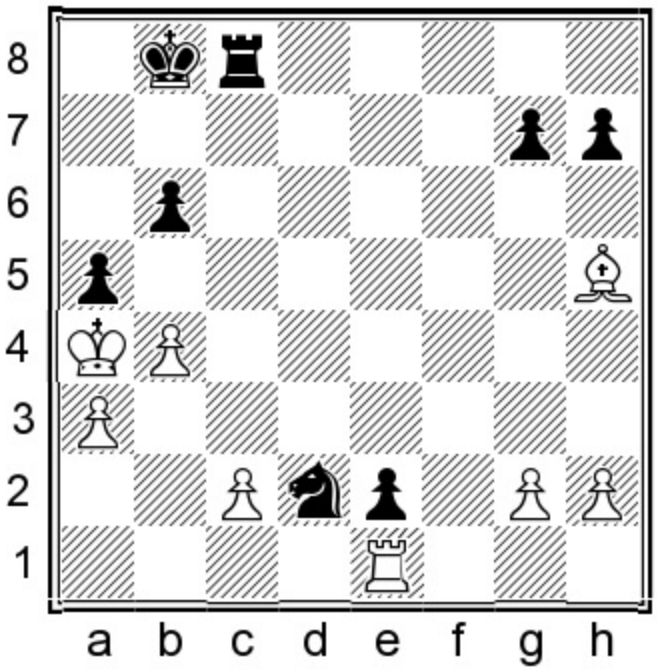
39...♘b5 (39...bxa5!? 40.♔c3 ♘b5† 41.♔d3 ♖d4† 42.♔e3 ♘xa3! also holds. But most would be scared going down a path like this. It looks a lot like the lines that failed for Sam and Awonder, except this time around there is no decisive tactic that takes Black down.) 40.axb6 ♘d4 41.♔c3 ♖xe2 42.♖xe2 ♘xe2† 43.♔c4



Sam had seen this variation and was justifiably worried about defending against three passed pawns in this type of scenario. 43...♔b7! 44.♔c5 ♘c3! And Black holds.

37.♔b3 ♘d2† 38.♔a4!

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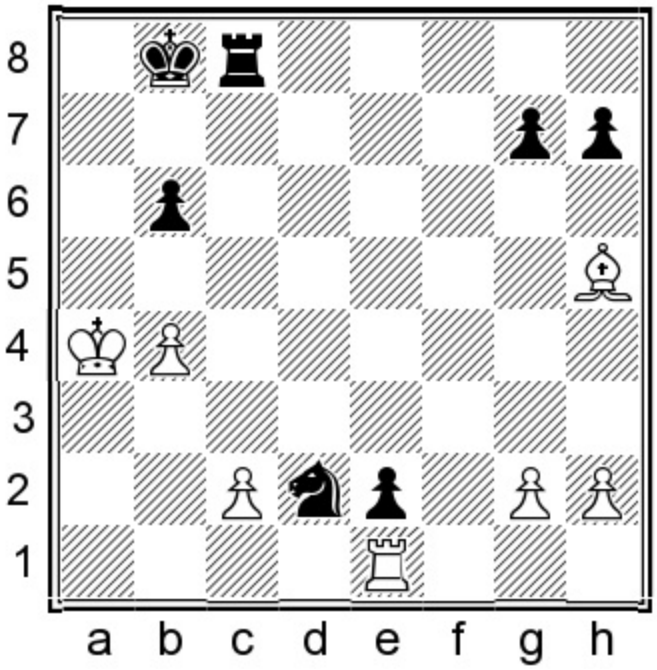


Jeffery wanted to go for this line and was not at all worried. But he had missed this move entirely, showing that it is not just Taimanov who has holes in his analysis, but also that he had seen and understood things that these talented youngsters did not get, even at his lesser moments in the annotations in this book.

38...axb4

Taimanov analysed 38...g6 39.♗g4 ♖xc2 40.♖xe2 axb4 41.axb4 ♖c4!?, thinking Black had reasonable chances. But after 42.h3 ♘e4 43.♔b5 ♖d4 44.♖c2 the position looks highly dangerous for Black.

39.axb4



Again the position looks very dangerous for Black, but it still holds with a fabulous resource.

39...♘e4! 40.♗xe2 ♖e8 41.♔b3 ♘f2

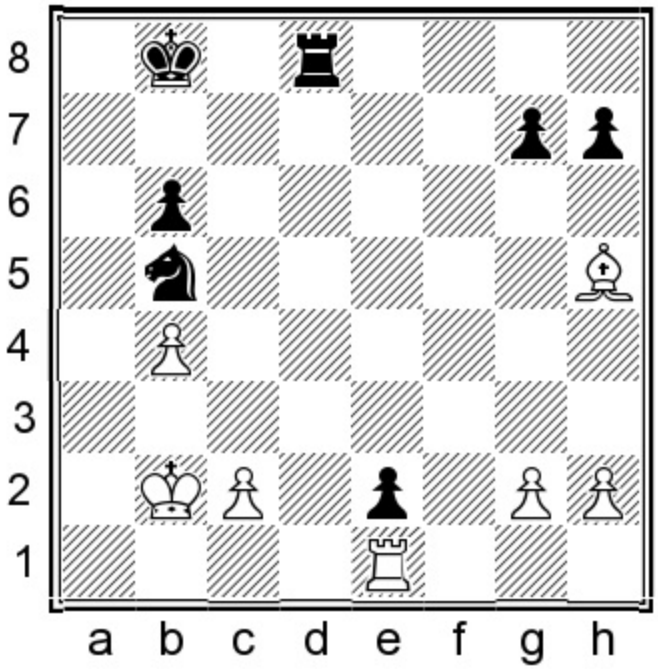
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White cannot escape the pin, thus leading to a draw.

Position 6

Fischer – Taimanov

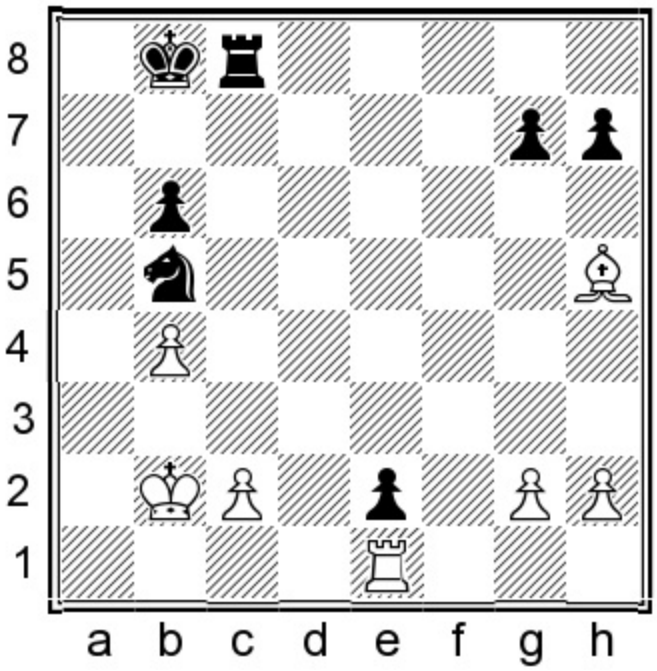
Vancouver (2) 1971



While there were arguably more accurate ways to defend the position earlier, it is at this point things go really wrong for Black.
37...♖d4? This is a big mistake. **38.c3 ♖h4 39.♗xe2** At this point in the game, Fischer was definitely winning.

Black had a stronger continuation, which the young players all found:
37...♖c8!

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a) 38.♗xe2 ♖e8 39.♔c1 ♘c3!

All of the players missed this idea.

Jeffery wanted to play 39...♖e4 40.♔d2 ♖xb4, but this is not really working. After 41.♖f1! White creates serious threats on the kingside, which it will be difficult to defend against. 41...♘d6 42.♖f8† ♔c7 43.♖g8 for example, would be winning for White.

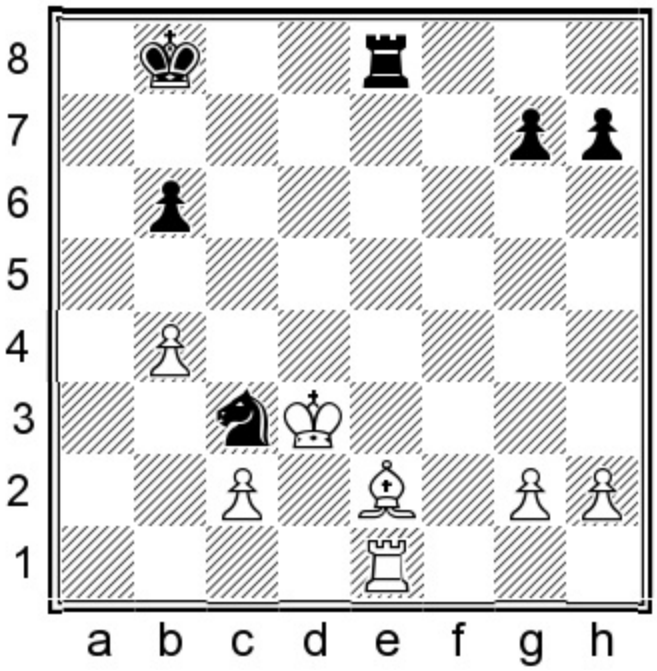
40.♔d2 ♘e4† 41.♔e3

41.♔d3 ♘f2† 42.♔d4 ♖e4† 43.♔c3 ♖e7 also works well for Black.

41...♘c3† 42.♔d3

The only serious try.

42.♔f2 ♘e4† will not allow White to escape from the pin.

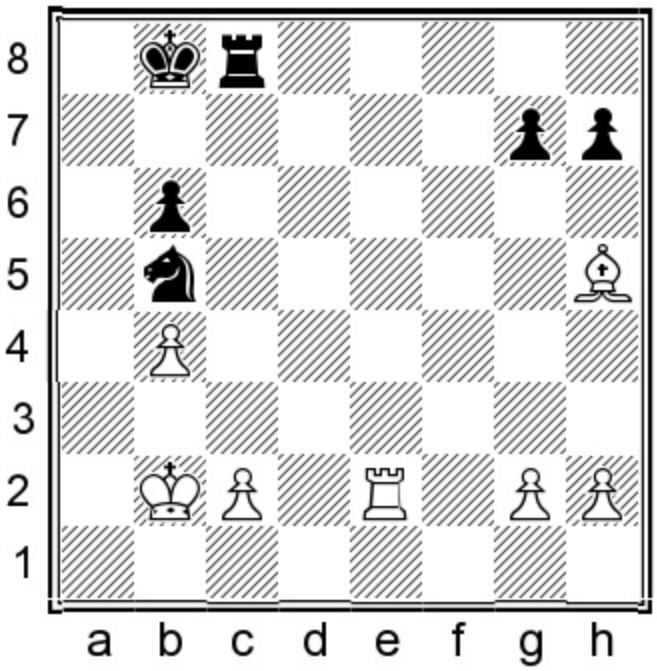


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42...♘d5! 43.c3 ♘f4† 44.♔d2 ♖d8†!

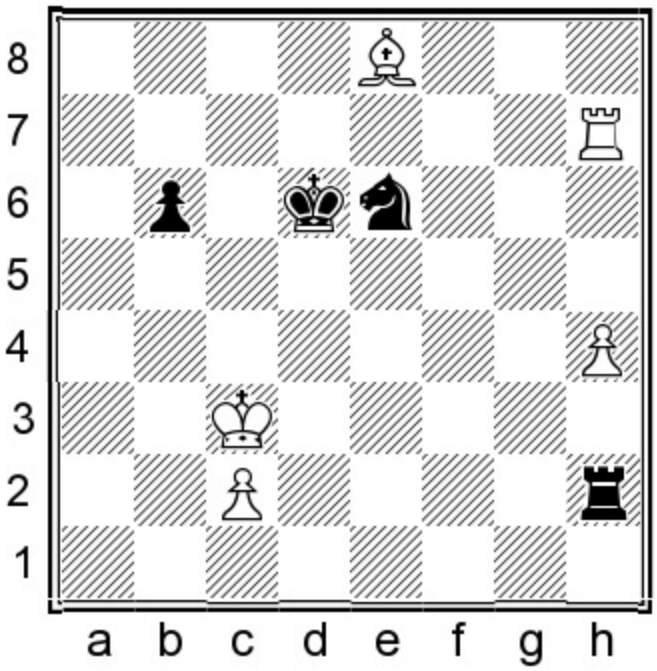
With an imminent repetition.

b) 38.♖xe2!



This is the more practical option. White keeps a definite advantage, but Black also has good defensive chances with his active pieces and the limited amount of material.

38...♖c4 39.♖e8† ♔c7 40.♖e7† ♔d6 41.♖xg7 ♖xb4† 42.♔c1 ♖h4 43.♗e8 ♘d4 44.h3 ♖f4! 45.♔d2 ♘e6 46.♖xh7 ♖f2† 47.♔c3 ♖xg2 48.h4 ♖h2



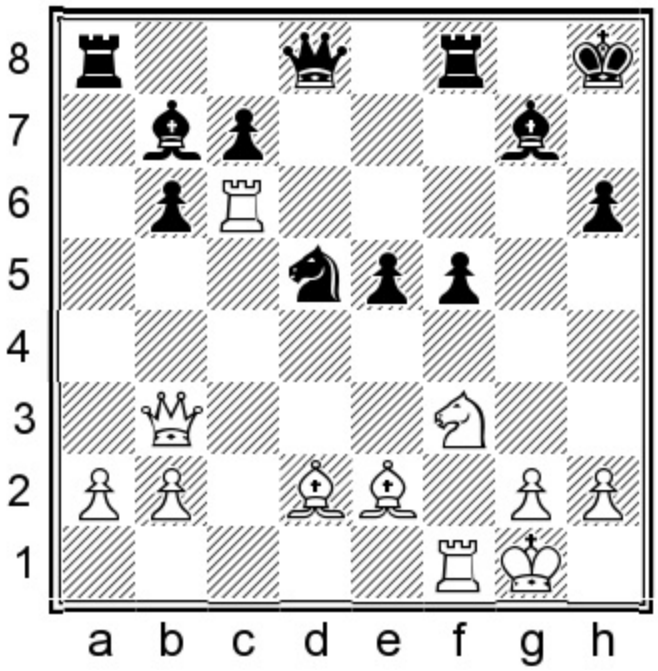
While Black has to do some defending in this endgame, he is also likely to be successful with accurate play. It is easy to imagine that later Black will have to hold a rook vs. rook and bishop endgame.

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Position 7

Taimanov – Fischer

Vancouver (3) 1971



Both Awonder and Sam found this position to be rather obvious. Maybe this is a change in the dynamic sensibility across the generations. But then it was not as obvious to ...

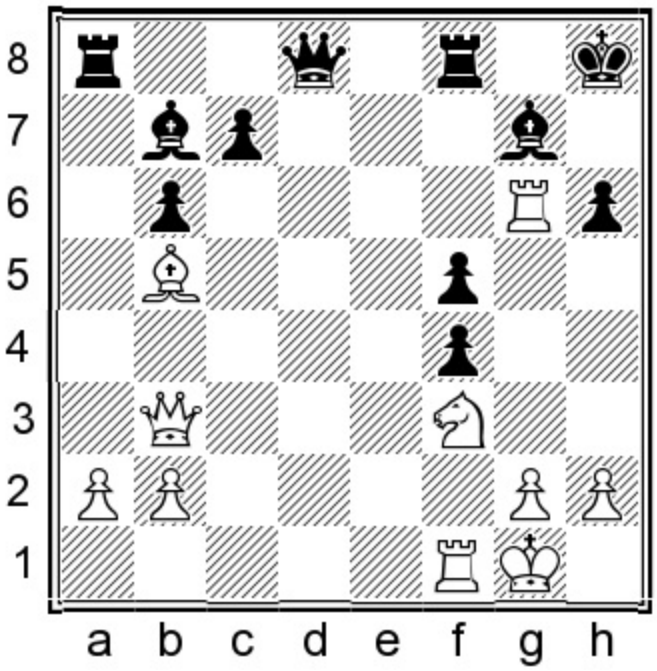
21.♖g6 ♘f4! 22.♗xf4 exf4

This was played in the game. At this point Taimanov is in serious danger.

23.♖d1

Jeffery wanted to play 23.♗b5, but after natural moves, Black is better:

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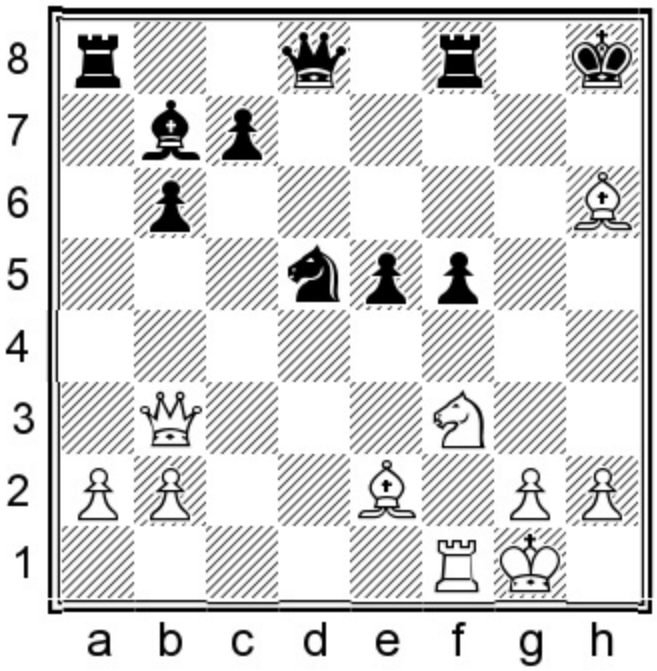


23...♕d5 24.♕xd5 ♗xd5 25.♗c6 ♗xc6 26.♖xc6 ♖f7, with an extra pawn and threats against the queenside. Black should win.

23...♕e7

Fischer was in control and won a good game.

White should give up the exchange: 21.♖xh6†! ♗xh6 22.♗xh6



a) Awonder was imagining that maybe there were active counter-chances after: 22...♘f4 23.♗xf8? ♘xe2† 24.♔h1 ♕xf8 25.♘xe5, but here 25...♘d4 will take control and give Black the win.

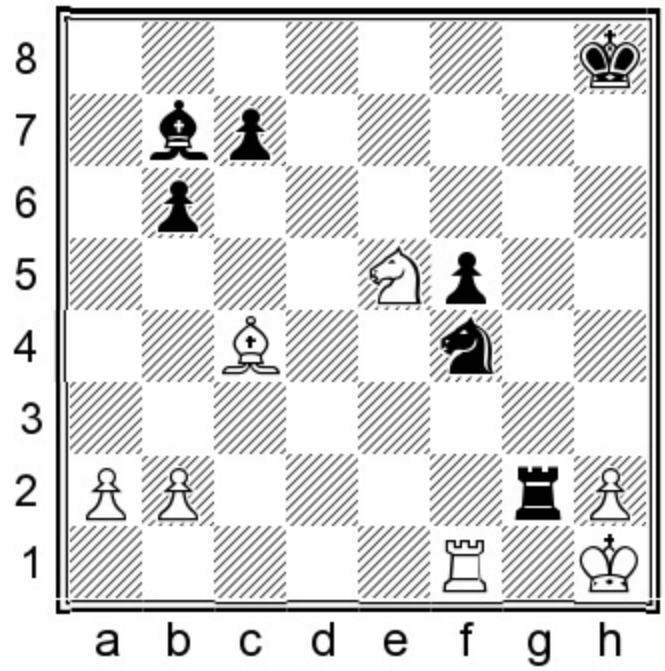
Thus 23.♗c4! with compensation and even chances is probably simpler.

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b) Sam pointed out that 22...♖g8 23.♘xe5 ♖xg2† 24.♔xg2 ♘f4† was a very difficult mess to evaluate.

c) Jeffery on the other hand rejected the exchange sacrifice, thinking that 22...♕f6 23.♗xf8 ♖xf8 24.♗c4 ♘f4 was unpleasant for White.

One variation he mentioned was: 25.♕c3 ♖g8 26.♕xe5 ♕xe5 27.♘xe5 ♖xg2† 28.♔h1

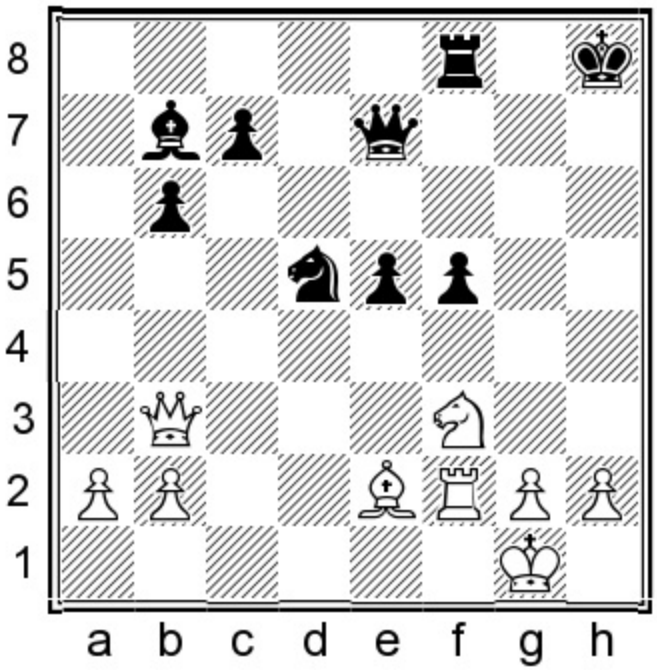


28...♖g1†! 29.♔xg1 ♘h3# This is certainly pretty.

But White can coordinate his pieces better: 25.♕e3 ♖e8 26.♘xe5!, when White is not worse in the complications.

d) Strongest is probably: 22...♕e7! 23.♗xf8 ♖xf8 24.♖f2

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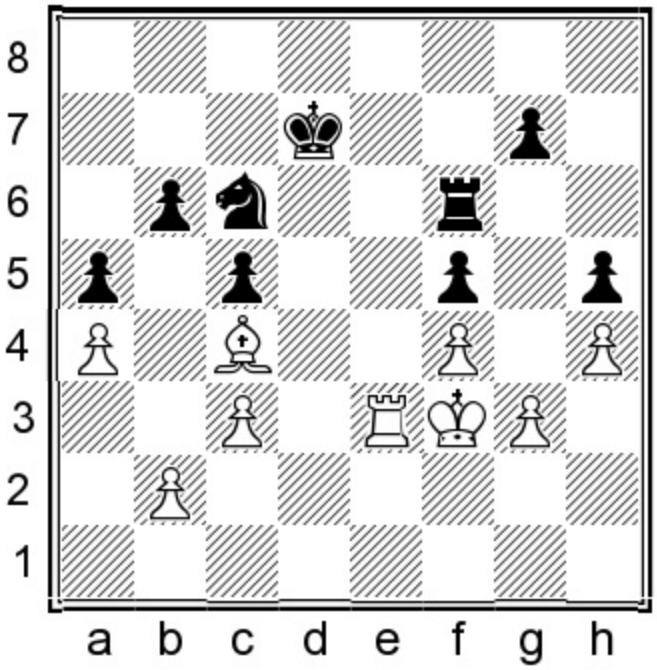


White is marginally worse, but should not be in serious trouble if he plays decently.

Position 8

Fischer – Taimanov

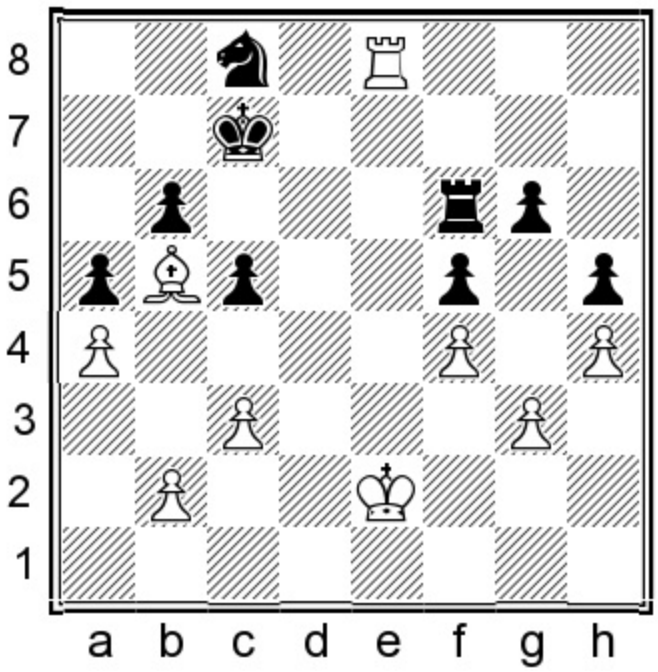
Vancouver (4) 1971



After **40...g6? 41.♗b5!**, the game was adjourned and Taimanov was never able to recover.

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All three young Americans noticed that Black should play 40...♘a7!. Once the knight gets to d6 it is a fortress. For example: 41.♔e2 ♘c8 42.♗b5† ♔c7 43.♖e8 g6



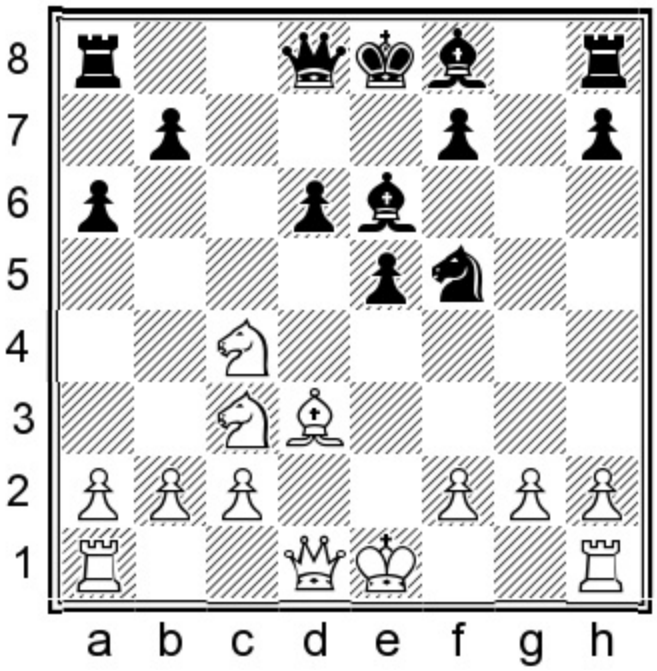
Next comes ...♘d6. The white king cannot penetrate and with the e8-square unavailable for the bishop, there is no way to play seriously for a win. While this is probably the biggest oversight of the 12 positions, we should show understanding towards Taimanov. Earlier the endgame was very dangerous and this move was played just before the adjournment, the time most fertile for mistakes. The slip is entirely human, especially when the position has been structurally the same for about 20 moves beforehand, and no one was kind enough to tell Taimanov that at exactly this moment, there was a chance to hold...

Position 9

Fischer – Taimanov

Vancouver (6) 1971

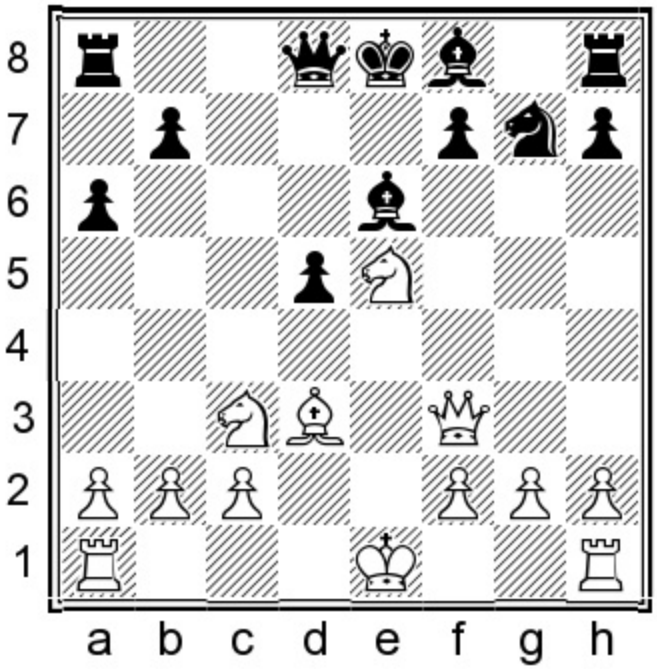
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In the game, after **14...♖c8 15.♗xf5 ♖xc4**, the chances were roughly equal, and as usual, Fischer later won...

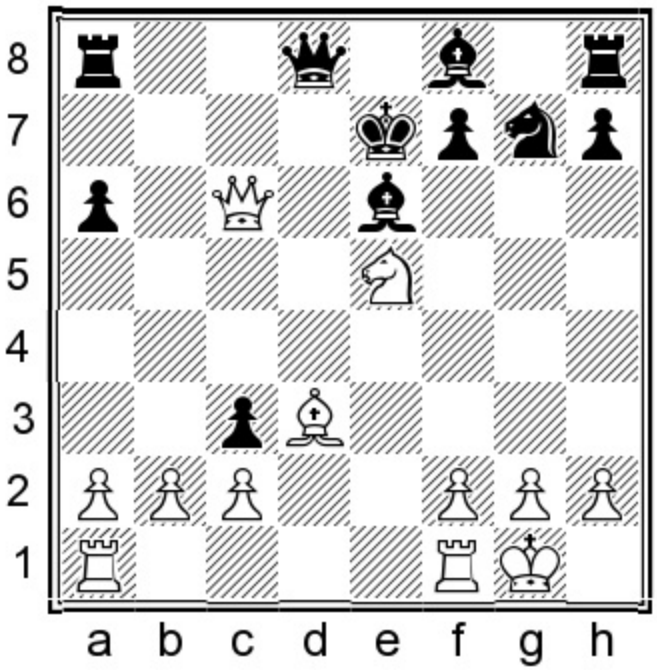
Awonder wanted to try 14...♘g7!? the second time around. This is a bit odd, but not necessarily worse than the game.

White's best move would be 15.♕f3, when he wanted to try: 15...d5! 16.♘xe5



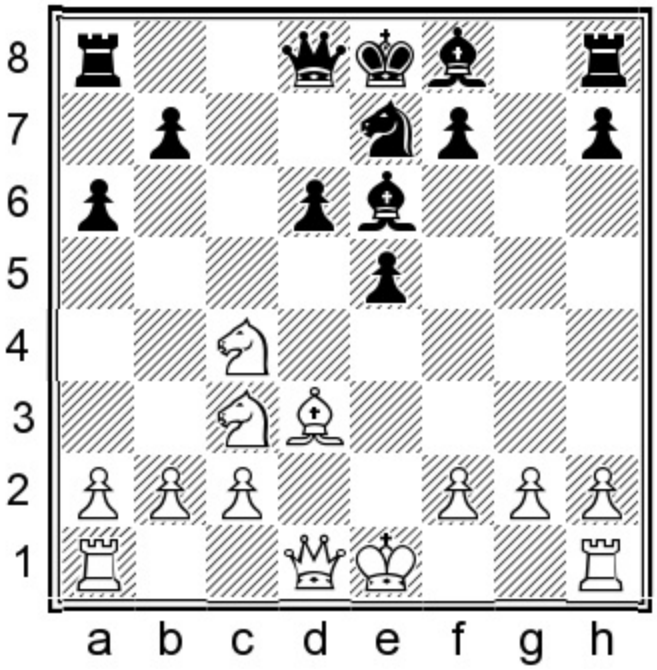
16...d4?! (16...♕c7! with counterplay on the dark squares is the right move here. The position is objectively balanced.) But he missed that after 17.♕xb7! dxc3 18.♕c6† ♔e7 19.0-0! the prospects, with the king stuck in the centre and the pieces not playing well together, are dire, at least from a practical viewpoint.

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The computer does say that after 19...cxb2! 20.♖ae1 ♕c8! 21.♕f3 f6! Black is holding. But in practical terms, there will still be a big chance to fall down on every move for quite a while, with the chance of winning the game with the extra piece seeming slim to me.

The right move here was:
14...♘e7!



"Automatic move in the Sveshnikov" said Sam Shankland. Both he and Jeffery wanted to play this. Sam is of course right; but in 1971, the Sveshnikov Variation was not yet developed. This happened throughout the 1970s and 1980s, before it finally became the main weapon of first Kramnik, then Leko, in their ascent to the top of the world elite.

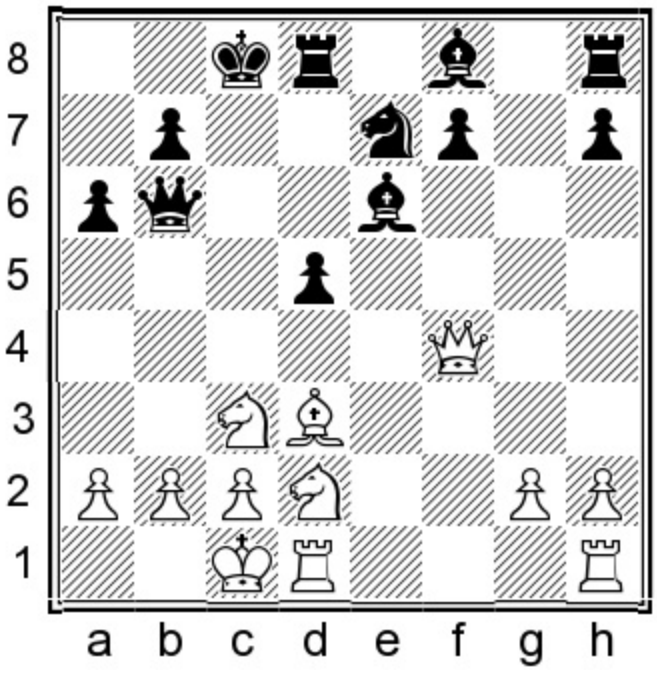
15.♕f3!?

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This seems to be the best try.

Any combination with 15.♘xd6†? just fails: 15...♕xd6! Black has ...♘c6 on ♗b5† no matter the move order.

15.f4 exf4 16.♕f3 d5 17.♘d2 ♕b6 18.0-0-0 0-0-0 19.♕xf4



19...♘g6 gives Black the type of dark-square control he is hoping for in these lines. Black is much better.

15.0-0 ♕c7 16.♘e3 d5 with a winning initiative is the basis of Black's play. The control of d5 and f5 is what it is all about.

15...d5!

The move you want to play. And it works!

However, 15...♗g7!? is also good, it should be said.

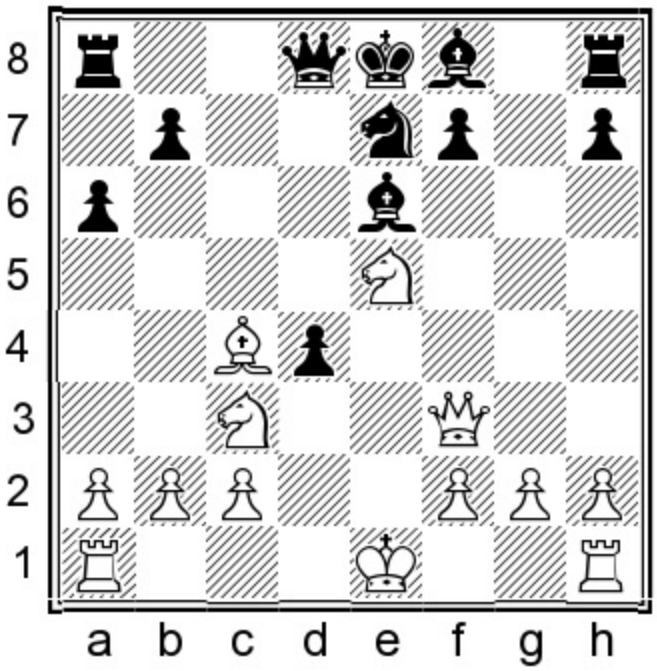
16.♘xe5 d4

With a check looming on a5, White cannot move the c3-knight.

17.♗c4!

Thus, this is the only try.

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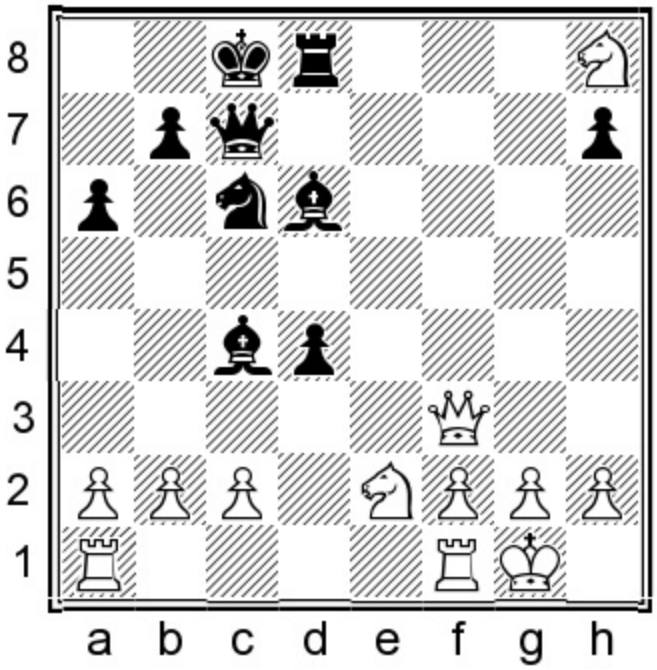
17...♕c7!

But Black has this move.

18.♘xf7

18.♕f6 ♗xc4 19.♕xh8 dxc3 also leaves White lost.

18...♗xc4 19.♘xh8 0-0-0 20.♘e2 ♘c6 21.0-0 ♗d6

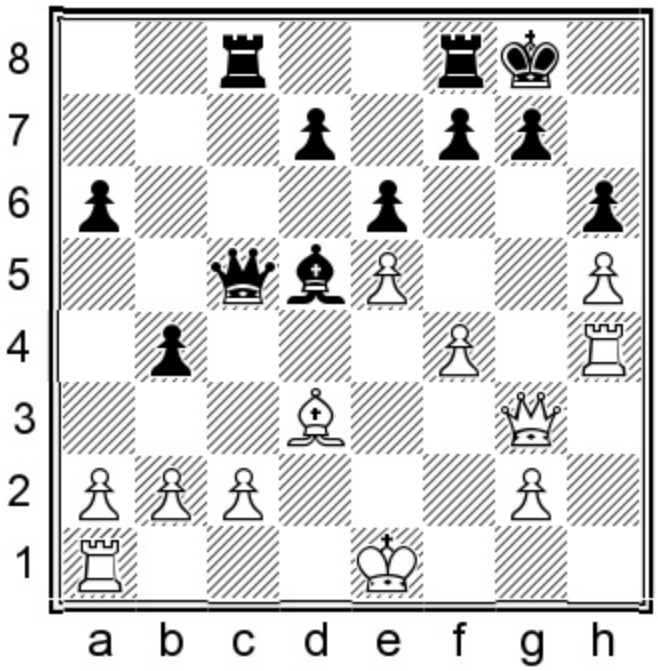


Black wins the knight on h8 and retains a strong initiative. His position is virtually winning.

Position 10

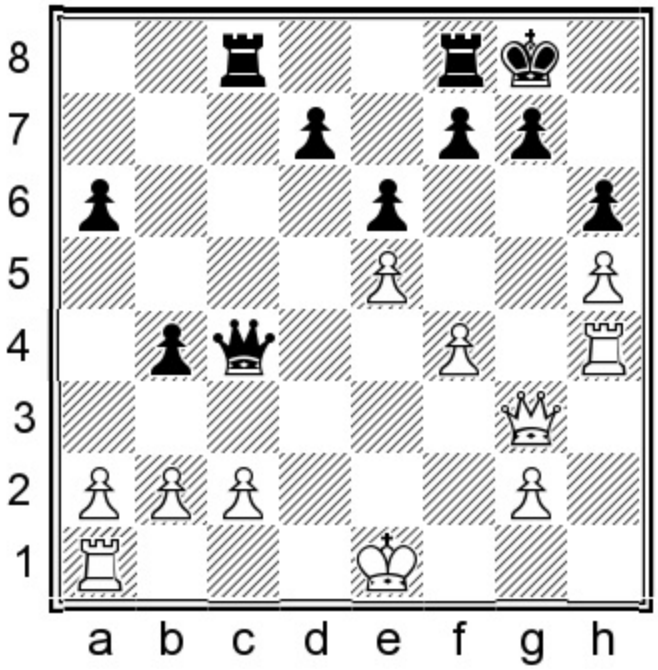
Lutikov – Taimanov

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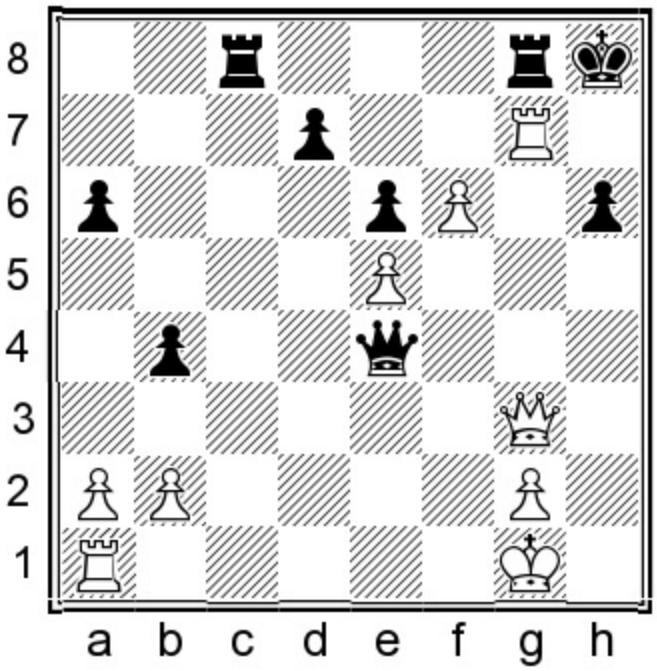
Jeffery wanted to play: **25...♕g1†? 26.♔d2 ♕d4** like Taimanov, but when he got to the next position, he realized that he probably had taken a wrong turn!

Both Sam and Awonder at first wanted to play 25...♗c4?, which makes a lot of sense strategically, but is met with a brilliant refutation: 26.♗xc4! ♕xc4



27.f5!! Winning a great tempo. Surprisingly there are no serious checks Black can give. 27...♕xc2 28.f6 ♕h7 29.♖g4 White has a winning attack. The forced line goes like this: 29...g5 30.hxg6 fxg6 31.♖xg6† ♔h8 32.♖g7 ♕e4† 33.♔f1 ♖g8 34.♔g1

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The material is equal, but Black is facing immediate troubles. One threat is ♖f1 then f6-f7. 34...d6!? 35.♖d1! ♕xe5 36.♕g6 is one possible end.

In the end our three young friends were thinking of something like 25...f5 26.exf6 ♖xf6 27.♖g4 ♕f8, where Black has a slightly easier life in an unclear position.

The surprising solution was not found by any of the players, even though they found the desired strategic idea of exchanging the bishop on d3, which is holding White's position together.

25...♔h8!

The natural move would be:

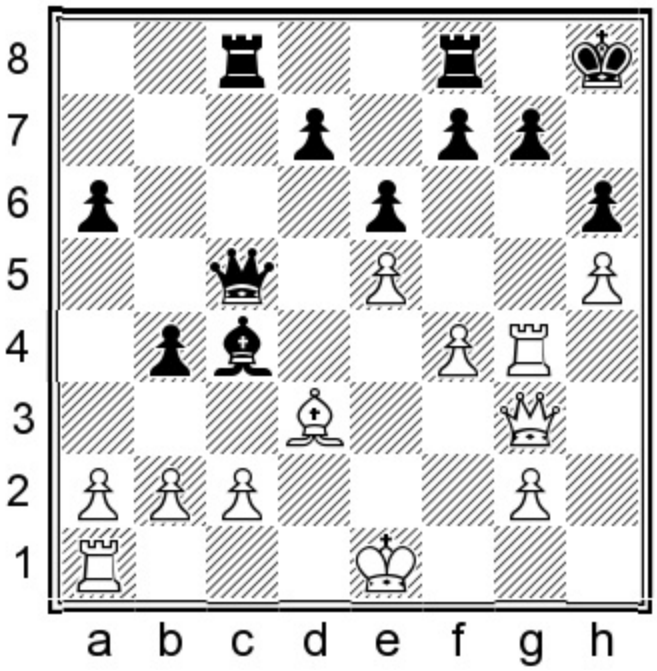
26.♖g4?!

But it turns out that the rook will not be very dangerous on g7. Black has time to implement the strategic idea of eliminating the white bishop.

26...♗c4!!

Sam did consider 26...♕g1† 27.♔d2 ♕d4, which was his choice the second time around.

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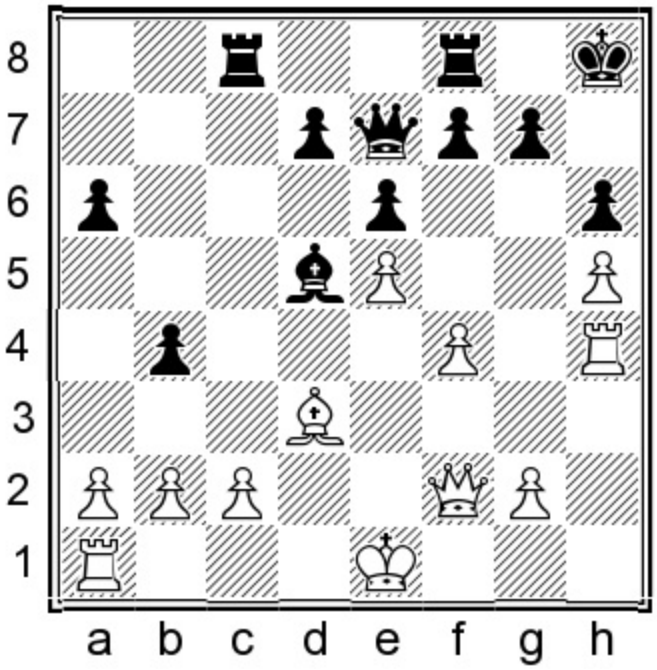


White is in desperate trouble. Taking on g7 does not lead to any real threats. Black will happily exchange bishops and pick up the rook on a1.

And after 27.♗xc4 ♕xc4 28.f5 ♕c5! White's position is fully open and full of weaknesses.

Thus 27.0-0-0, when 27...♖c7! followed by ...♗xd3 and ...♖fc8 will create overwhelming threats.

For this reason, White has to retreat with 26.♕f2!, when Black would probably play: 26...♕e7

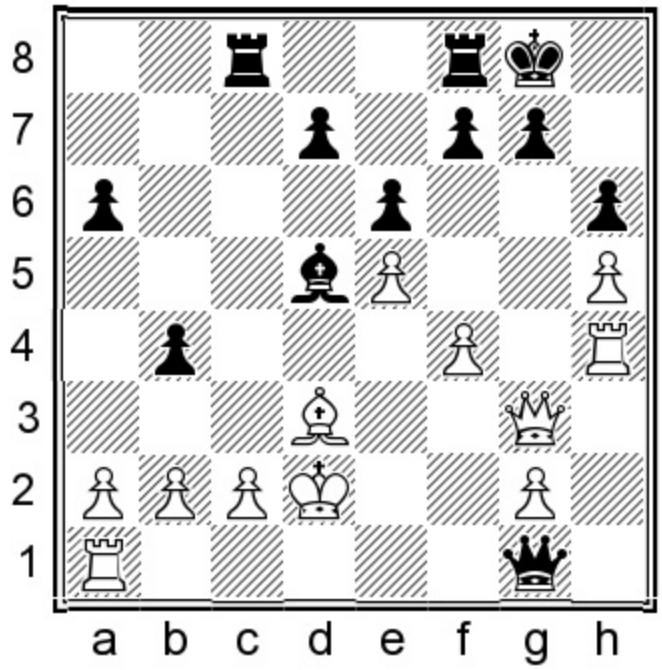


Followed by ...f6 with a very pleasant position, even if the game is a long way from over.

Position 11

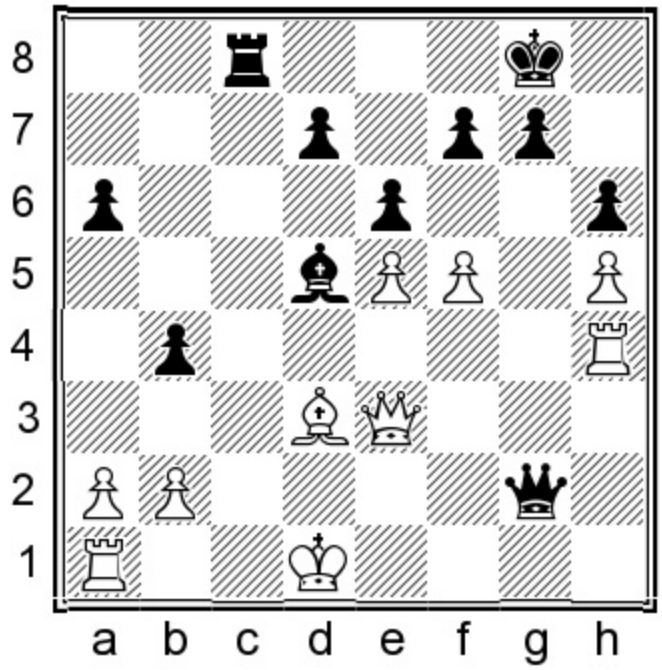
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We already know that after **26...♕d4 27.f5!**± Taimanov was in a lot of trouble.

What Awonder and Jeffery (while thinking about the previous exercise) missed was: 27...♖xc2† 28.♔xc2 ♖c8† 29.♔d1! ♕g1† 30.♕e1 ♕xg2 31.♕e3!!



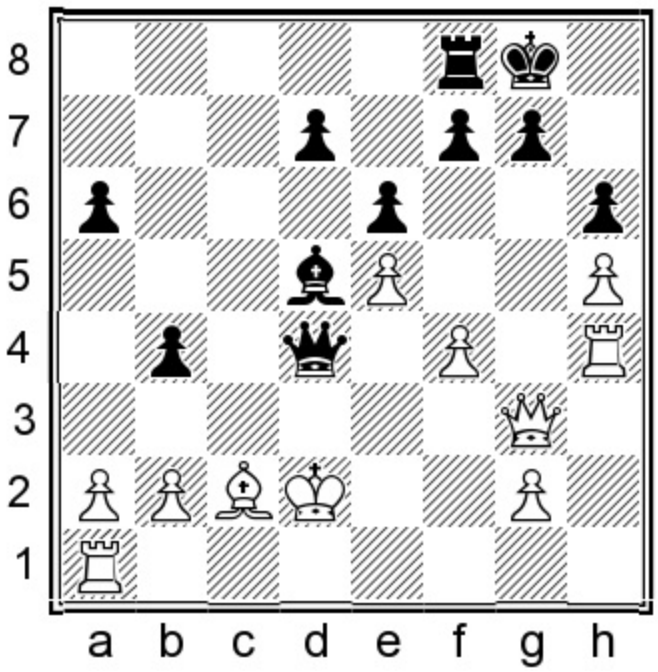
Black does not have enough for the rook.

Both Sam and Jeffery thus realized that they had to play:
26...♖xc2†! 27.♗xc2

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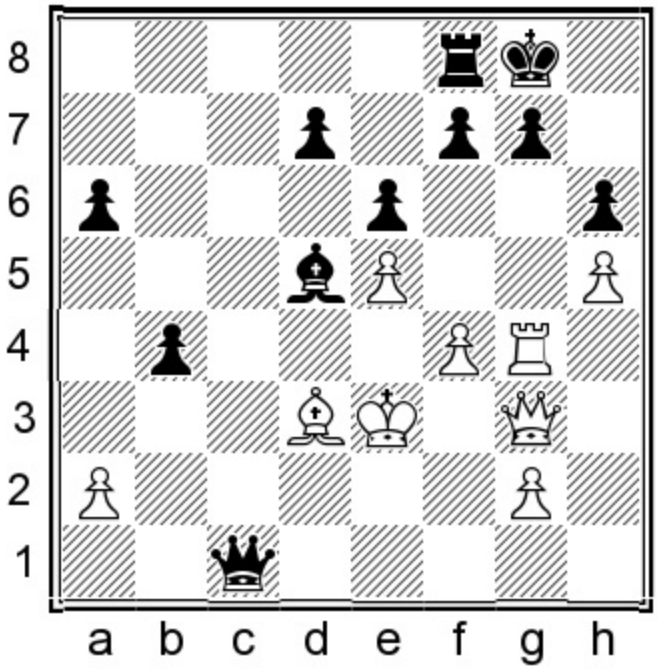
27.♔xc2? ♖c8† 28.♔d2 ♕xa1 would be entirely in Black's favour.

27...♕d4†



a) 28.♔c1? ♖c8! and ...♗e4 would win on the spot for Black.

b) 28.♗d3 leads to a draw after: 28...♕xb2† 29.♔e3 ♕xa1 30.♖g4 ♕c1†

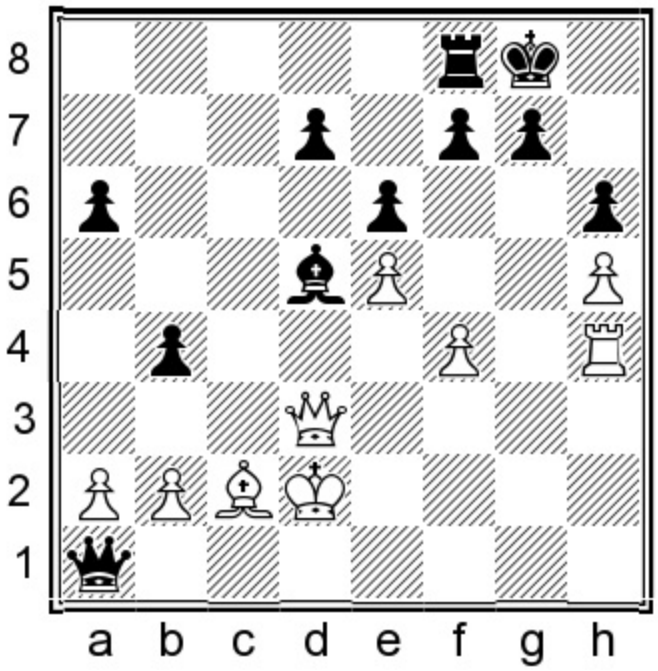


31.♔e2! and Black will have to give the perpetual now, or soon.

A small point is that 31.♔f2? ♕d2† 32.♔g1 ♗e4! would be winning for Black. The g7-pawn is not essential, but after the bishop is removed with ...♕d4†, Black has an extra pawn and many ways to continue.

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c) 28.♕d3 ♕f2† 29.♔d1 ♕g1† With a draw, as both Sam and Jeffery pointed out. White cannot run away from the checks: 30.♔e2 ♕xg2† 31.♔e1 ♕g1† 32.♕f1 ♕e3† 33.♕e2 ♕g1† 34.♔d2? ♕xa1 35.♕d3



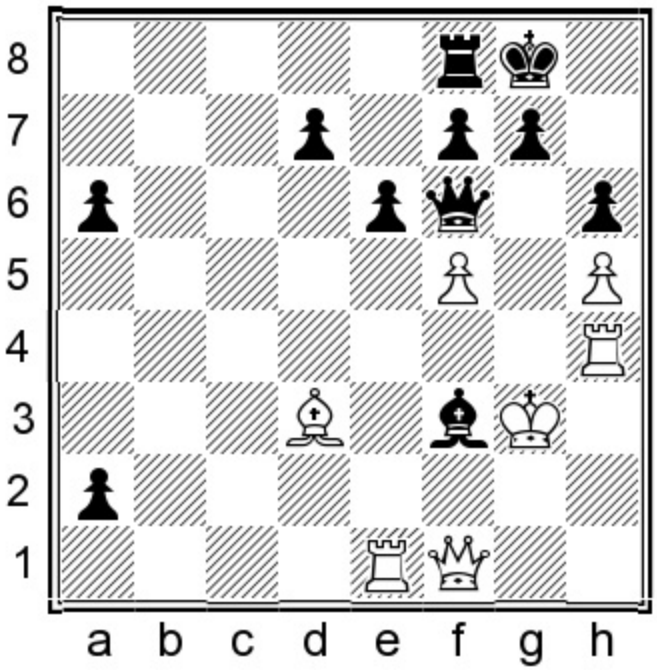
35...f5 36.exf6 ♕g1!! 37.♕h7† ♔f7 38.♕xg7† ♕xg7 39.fxg7 ♔xg7 With big winning chances for Black in the endgame.

Position 12

Lutikov – Taimanov

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The big surprise of this position was that Taimanov's glorious punch 36...♗g2? is a complete misunderstanding of the position.

37.♕g1?

The surprising aspect is that White is fine after 37.♕xg2! a1=♕ 38.♖xa1 ♕xa1, and almost whatever he wants to play here.

This was not only surprising to Taimanov, but also to Shankland and me. Black has four pawns, but his king is so weak that even without queens, it would not be so easy to make progress.

37...exf5! 38.♕d4 ♕g5† 39.♔h2 ♗e4 40.♖hxe4 fxe4 41.♕xe4 ♕xh5†

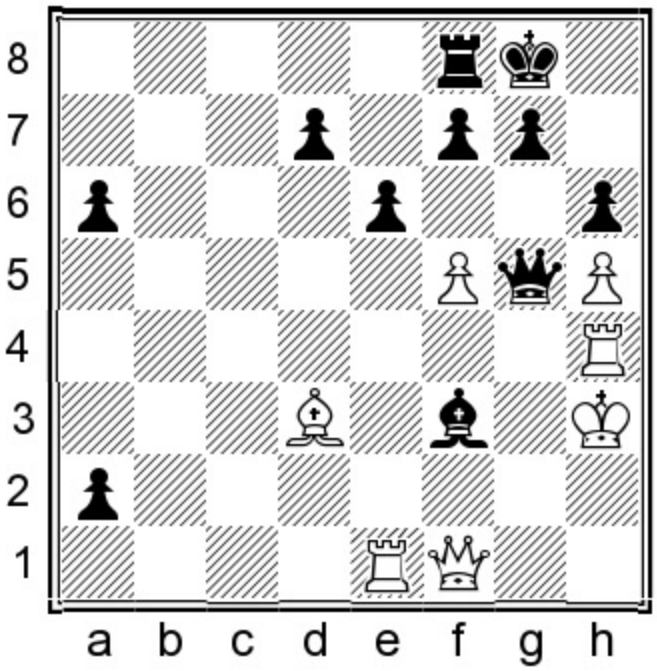
0–1

For the same reason 36...♖b8?, which was the first idea of Sam's, does not work. White plays 37.♕xf3! a1=♕ 38.♖xa1 ♕xa1 39.♖f4 and he has enough counterplay.

The first of the two solutions was found by Jeffery in his first try and Sam in his second:

36...♕g5† 37.♔h3

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a) Awonder wanted to play:

37...♕d2!?

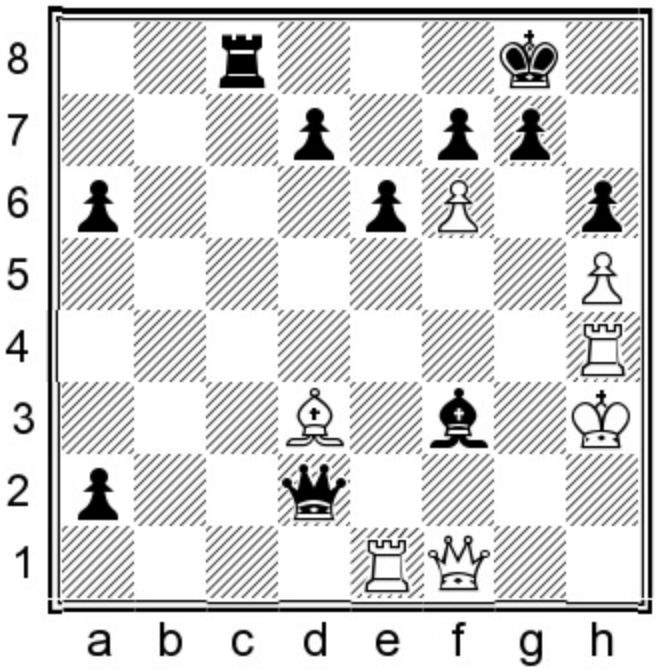
This does look very dangerous. But it is all perception. White can play:

38.f6!! ♖c8!

Not the only move, but the most natural one.

38...gxf6? 39.♕xf3 and White wins.

38...♗d5? also fails. White plays 39.♖g4! and the attack is what matters.



39.♕xf3!

This is the only move to play.

The very odd 39.♖d4 ♕a5 40.♕xf3 ♕xe1 41.♖g4 would transpose.

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39...♕xe1 40.♖g4

40.♖c4 ♖d8 41.♖g4 also transposes.

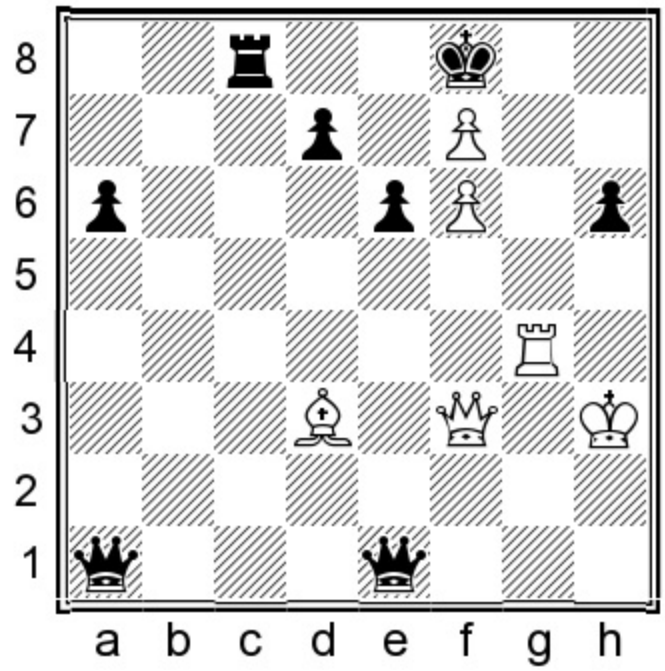
40...g5

40...d5 41.♖xg7† ♔f8 42.♕f4! also gives White enough counterplay for a draw.

40...a1=♕?? 41.♖xg7† ♔f8 42.♖g8† is on the other hand the way to get mated.

41.hxg6 a1=♕ 42.gxf7† ♔f8

42...♔h8? 43.♖g8†! leads to mate.



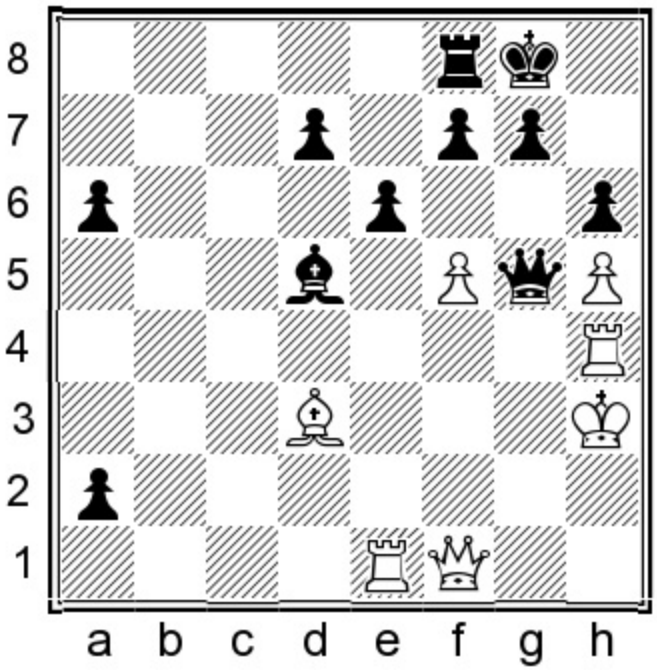
43.♖g8† ♔xf7 44.♖g7† ♔f8 45.♖g8†!

With perpetual check.

b) 37...♗d5!!

Black plays like he's got all the time in the world. And as if the bishop is stronger than the white rooks. He is not wrong.

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If White does nothing, Black will play ...♖b8 with a lot of attacking chances. So I wanted to try: 38.f6!?

Jeffery had not seen this. Sam on the other hand shut it down in a moment.

38...e5!!

38...♖b8? would be too automatic. After 39.♖g4! ♕xh5† 40.♖h4! ♕f3† 41.♕xf3 ♗xf3 42.♖g1! g6 43.♖a1! we get a highly complicated endgame. There is no particular reason to favour Black, being a rook down and all. But at the same time, White cannot get the pieces into play. The evil machine thinks the position is level.

39.♗f5 ♖b8

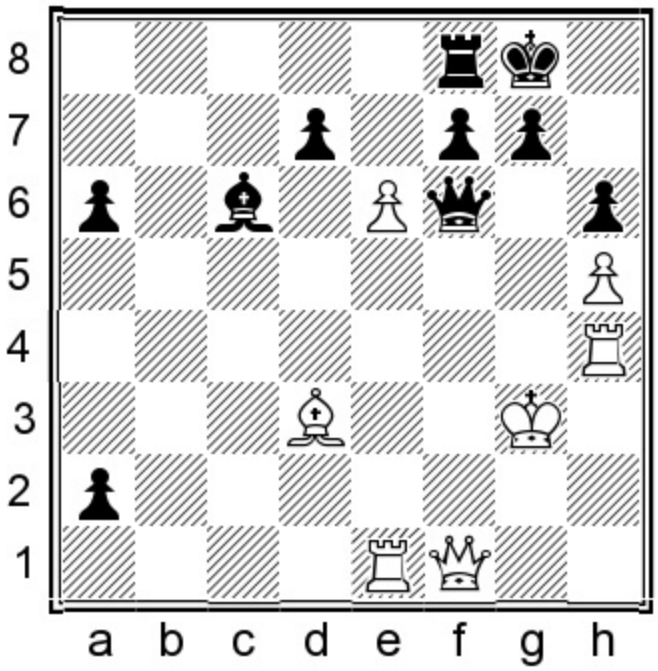
Black has a winning attack.

The second solution is one of these oddities that computers sometimes bring up. Black is winning with very careful play.

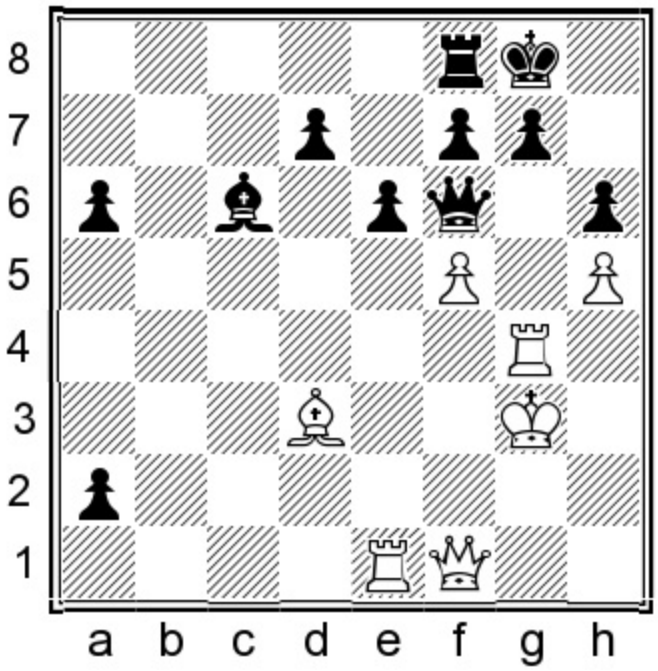
36...♗c6! 37.♖g4

37.fxe6 is nicely refuted with:

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37...a1=♕! 38.♖xa1 ♕e5† Black will continue with ...fxe6! to let the rook into the game. 39.♔h3 fxe6 40.♗h7† ♔xh7 41.♕xf8 ♕e3† would be mate quite quickly: 42.♔h2 ♕e2† 43.♔g3 ♕g2† 44.♔f4 ♕g5#



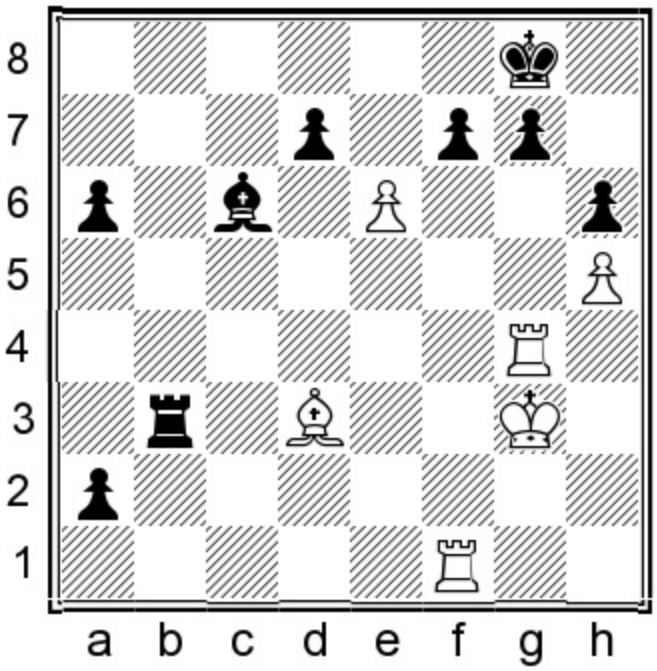
The true revelation comes here.

a) 37...♖b8?

Sam was obsessed with this natural idea of bringing the rook into the game.

38.fxe6 ♕xf1 39.♖xf1 ♖b3

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40.♖d4!

The only move.

40.exf7†? ♔f8! 41.♖d4 ♗b5 and Black wins.

40.e7? ♖xd3† 41.♔f2 ♖f3† 42.♔e2 ♖xf1 43.e8=♕† ♔h7 44.♖xg7† ♔xg7 45.♕e5† ♖f6 and Black is winning in the long run.

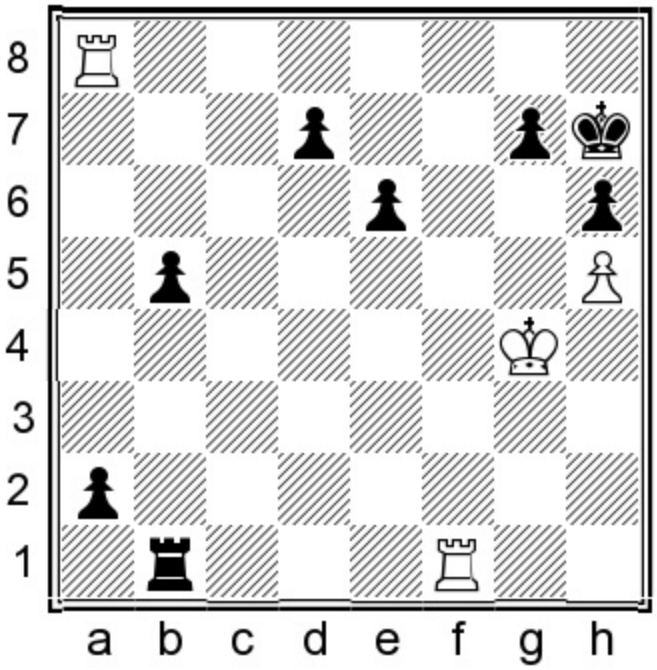
40...fxe6 41.♔g4

The chances are roughly equal, but a lot can still happen.

41...♗b5 42.♗xb5 ♖b1?

42...axb5 and the chances remain equal.

43.♖a4 axb5 44.♖a8† ♔h7



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45.♖ff8!

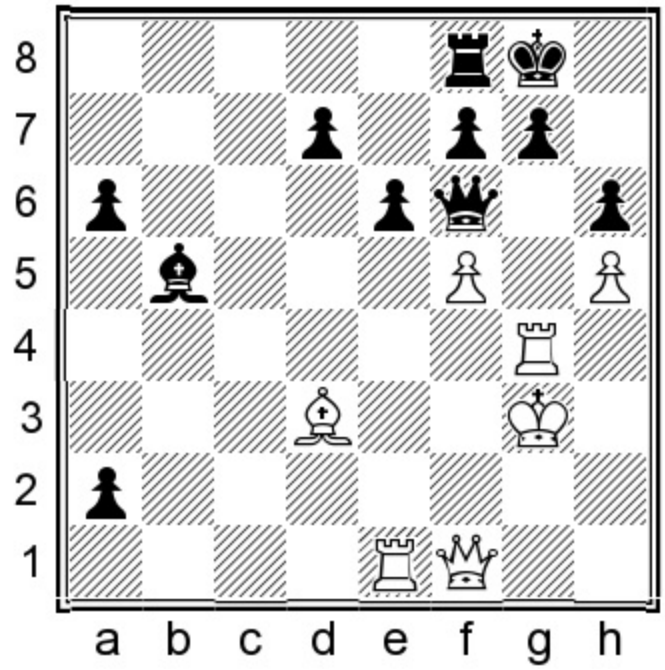
White wins after:

45...♖g1† 46.♔h3 ♖h1† 47.♔g3 ♖xh5 48.♖xa2

There is a good deal of work remaining, but it should be winning.

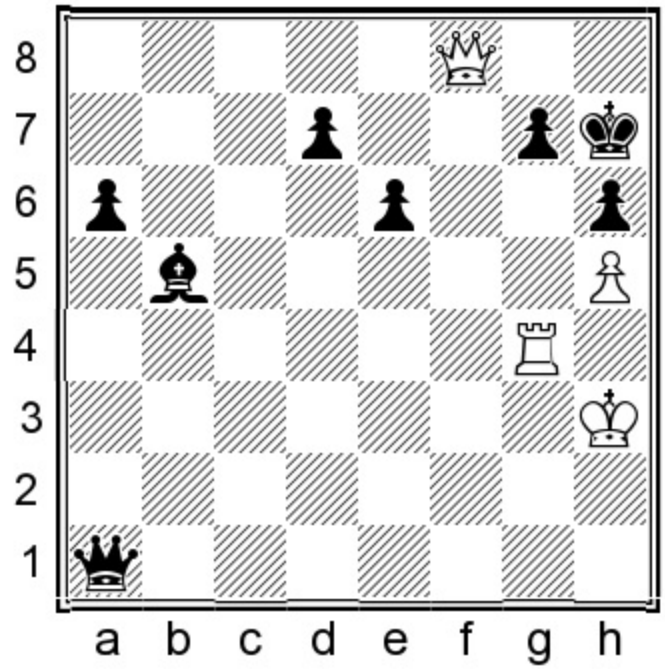
b) Black's winning move is:

37...♗b5!!



The winning idea is pure positional play. Black eliminates White's best piece and strips him of control of the light squares, which is devastating. One forcing line goes:

38.fxe6!? a1=♕! 39.♖xa1 ♕e5† 40.♔h3 fxe6 41.♗h7† ♔xh7 42.♕xf8 ♕xa1



Black has a winning advantage.

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Going through these 12 positions has taken a lot of space! It is not difficult to see why two of the strongest players of the 20th century could make mistakes in these complicated positions. Looking at them through the eyes of some of the greatest talents of US chess in the 21st century has undoubtedly given us a different understanding of the positions than we would have, had we simply copied Stockfish's suggestions.



Wayne and Jeffery Xiong, Jacob Aagaard and Kallia Kleisarchaki salute you!

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